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ARE WE BOLSHEVISING EUROPE?

FROM any speech of Hitler's the obsessional delusions and propagandist rubbish can be subtracted, leaving a residue of serious historical generalisation. Discount from his New Year's speech the usual foam about world-Jewry, the grim joke that the leaders of democracy (Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain, for instance!) had long been "spiritually and materially" preparing war against Germany, and the not very startling promise that the Nazis would show no pity or scruple in defending Germany against new attacks from the West. What is left?

An argument which public men will not think it expedient to discuss, but which may yet have serious effect beneath the surface unless its significance is discussed and understood. We may summarise it as follows. In four successive centuries Britain has defeated Imperial rivals—Spain, the French Monarchy, the French Empire and the German Empire. Always the technique has been the same—to organise and finance a Continental alliance against any Power that looks like dominating Europe. Numerous wars have been fought on this pattern. (To the British they have appeared partly as wars of national self-preservation, partly as successful refusals to allow the triumph of tyranny and the submergence of small nations.) In the present war, says Hitler, Britain has again attempted this feat, regardless of the fact that circumstances have so changed that the collapse of Germany would this time not mean restoring the balance of power, but making Bolshevism triumphant. In any case, Britain will be weakened by the war and stand in a difficult relation both to the U.S.S.R. and the United States. On both these points Hitler's argument closely follows that of General Smuts. Hitler added that Europe cannot live without Germany and that its elimination would mean the end of a 2,500-year-old cultural tradition.

What is the reply? First that it was the Nazis who set out deliberately to destroy the whole system of Mediterranean culture on which Western civilisation is based. It was Hitler who declared that Nazi Germany would wipe out the decadent cultures of Europe and substitute its own ideas for a thousand years; it was Goebbels who said that the Nazis had come to destroy the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, and Himmler who actually began the systematic destruction of Christianity in Germany. One reason why we fight this war is because the whole idea of basing society on the happiness of the individual, the tradition of liberty, toleration and reason, which has been handed down from Greece, the notion of mercy which came from Judea, and of law which was the gift of Rome—all these were challenged deliberately by the older Nordic gods of Terror and Power whom the Nazis worship. But Bolshevism in the sense of Soviet communism, is not a throwback to pre-Greek and pre-Christian paganism; it is in itself part of the cultural tradition of the Mediterranean. Never was culture made available to so many people as in U.S.S.R. It is a doctrine based on reason, not on "thinking with the bowels"; its ruthless methods are born of circumstance and experience, not of the inevitable results of an inhuman theory.

But when Hitler dreads Bolshevism he has more in mind than Moscow, more even than the defeat of the Teuton by the Slav armies now driving back his troops over the old Polish frontier. He has in mind the effects of British and American bombing in Europe. How that looks to him we can tell by a soldier's broadcast on the German radio which describes the ruins of Kharkov and added that Berlin looked very much the same. Air-Marshal Harris is indeed completing the process of destroying the German middle-class that was begun by inflation and stopped by the Nazis. Bombing is a great equaliser. The men and women of Berlin, whom Scandinavian observers describe as walking about clothed only in a blanket because no supplies of clothing exist, are very effectively proletarianised. Allied bombs are obliterating the "small man" in Germany and producing that vast proletariat, destitute of home or indeed of every sort of tie and property, which used to be depicted by Marxian theory, but which has not in fact existed in the later days of capitalism. These are workers of the world who have nothing to lose except their air-raid shelters. The towns of Germany are to be systematically destroyed: Nazis, anti-Nazis, brutes, cowards, quiet citizens—all of them are Germans, to be reduced to the same level of destitute apathy. Well, it is a policy no doubt; one may say for it that it is the only way in which capitalists could ever have been persuaded to destroy Krupps. It is likely to produce not a Communist revolution in the Russian sense, which implies an organised, deliberate movement of men with a social purpose. It will rather produce a demoralisation, an anarchy that is the precise reverse of communism, but which easily passes in Hitler's mind for Bolshevism. Certainly Hitler is right in suggesting that a prolonged process of such bombing, combined with the vast migration of populations and the general hunger of Europe, is likely to end in the chaos and nihilism that is the logical conclusion both of war and Fascism.

This logical catastrophe need not happen. Stalin has told us that there must be a Germany, and the appeals of the "Free Germans" continue to promise from Moscow an opportunity for Germans after the war to live quietly under a democratic government. This is Soviet policy. There is reason to believe that the U.S.S.R. is not anxious to occupy Germany, and that Stalin has the same war aim for all the States of East and Central Europe. Russia wants "popular front" governments, friendly to Russia and capable of entering into economic and political arrangements with their neighbours. Here, and here only, would seem to lie the chance of building a more stable Europe and making some reality out of our promises to keep together the United Nations after the war. If Stalin and Roosevelt and Churchill could even now agree on a constructive policy for Europe and substitute it for the improvised phrase about "unconditional surrender," we should have a better reply to Hitler. It is a phrase that sounds tough but which signifies nothing. In practice, as we saw in Italy, it only means that the conditions offered are not discussed or published. Hitler we notice, breathes a sigh of relief that this time there is to be no "Wilsonism." All Germans are to rally to him to the end; this raging Samson is to be left to pull down the pillars of the temple and European civilisation is to perish

In the ruins. Fascism has justified its definition as "the organisation of social decay." There is no reason why democracy should not develop the creative alternative.

Poland and the U.S.S.R.

The arrival of the Red Army at the 1920 Polish frontier inevitably brings to the forefront the question of the reactions of the Polish Resistance Movements and of the Polish emigre Government in London. As Russian troops move westwards there is danger of friction and clashes in the actual theatre of operations. The immediate attitude, moreover, of the Polish Government in London is most unhelpful. In statements to the press, the Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk, has spoken in general terms of desiring good Polish relations with the U.S.S.R., but the manifesto issued on Wednesday in London by his government evades every real issue and makes co-operation between Polish partisans and Russian troops dependent on a political agreement recognising Polish "rights." This in the midst of the battle!

If this means that the Polish Government intends to put forward and seek support in the United States for a claim to maintain a frontier imposed on a defeated Russia, with little or no ethnographical justification, in 1920, the cause of the Polish peasants and workers will be ill-served. Moscow will never admit discussion of Russia's right to incorporate the whole of Byelo-Russia and the Western Ukraine into the U.S.S.R., and Russia's Western allies could produce no valid arguments against a frontier conforming roughly to the Curzon Line, even if they had the power effectively to intervene in such a dispute. For friendship with the U.S.S.R.—a condition vital for her existence—Poland must pay a price which means economic loss to some of her land-owning families and the abatement of the grandiose territorial conceptions of her military caste. We believe M. Mikolajczyk to be a realist. The question is whether his Government can move sufficiently far towards realism to make accommodation with Russia on friendly terms practicable. To pretend, as the Foreign Office is now doing, that the Polish manifesto is a step forward, is only to encourage an attitude which will result in the Poles being treated as enemies by Germans and Russians simultaneously.

The Struggle in Yugoslavia

The curious communique issued by the Puritch Government in Cairo, announcing that Marshal Tito's forces have suffered catastrophic defeats at the hands of the enemy, can be heavily discounted as propaganda, or wishful thinking; read in conjunction with Tito's claim to have inflicted a decisive defeat on one of General Mihailovitch's quisling brigades in Herzegovina, and the news that a number of Jugoslav officers and men in Egypt have asked for facilities to join the Partisan forces, its purpose becomes evident. The Puritch Government, which has just dismissed several prominent supporters of the Resistance Movement from their official positions in London, is now obviously intent on fabricating news about Yugoslavia. Its aim is to sabotage world support for the Liberation Committee. The truth is that, after several weeks of intensive campaigning against the Partisans, the Germans have failed to make much progress in Western Croatia and Slovenia. Farther south, they have secured most of the main ports of Dalmatia and Montenegro, with a view presumably to cutting the Partisans off from their sea-borne supplies; and, in the hinterland, German columns have fought their way along the main valleys and railways—e.g., from Zagreb to Sibenik, and from Brod through Sarajevo to Metkovic. They have thus succeeded in splitting Marshal Tito's forces into more or less isolated groups. The Germans' difficulty, however, is that these groups tend to coalesce again as soon as the enemy columns have cut their way through them. Unless their supplies completely fail, Marshal Tito's forces should be able to hold out, and thus pin down very considerable numbers of German troops.

Franco's Approaching Crisis

Fascist Spain is now encountering serious internal and diplomatic difficulties. For some time there has been talk of a possible restoration of the monarchy and there is no doubt that Franco has flirted with the idea, not only for its value to him in his relations with the Allies, but also because he hoped that it might help him to bolster up his weakening personal dictatorship. Now it appears that the monarchy is viewed as an alternative rather than a supplement to the present system. This is shown by an extraordinary letter from Gil Robles (clerical Fascist leader now exiled in Portugal) to General Assensio, Franco's War Minister, published last week by *Spanish News Letter*. Robles now urges Assensio, who is known to be a supporter of the monarchy, to make immediate preparations for the return of Don Juan of Bourbon to the Spanish throne and for the removal of Franco. The approaching wreck of Spanish Fascism is clearly anticipated: the growing power of the Allies, the collapse of Mussolini, the bankruptcy of the Caudillo's policy all point to this conclusion. Robles and the Spanish aristocracy hope to save the "essence of the Nationalist movement" by setting up a monarchy which by a timely switch in foreign policy could continue the domestic Fascist set-up without undue embarrassment. The proposal for a military putsch shows the present standing of the monarchists in the eyes of the Spanish people. It also shows the fear of reactionary circles that the invasion of the Continent would provide the opportunity for Spanish democrats to accomplish their liberation along with the general uprising. The authorities here are slow to admit that the Franco regime is precarious as well as beastly. Last week we reported that Antonio Torres was "taken off the air" because Sir Samuel Hoare found what he said distasteful to the Franco Government. Now the B.B.C. makes matters no better by explaining that it stopped the talks Torres was giving in view of present negotiations with Spain. So, more simply, the B.B.C. and the Government hold the view that we must not speak in Spanish about the Four Freedoms, when negotiating with Spanish Fascists. It looks as though appeasement is not dead.

Mr. Hudson and the Farmers

The dispute between the farmers and Mr. Hudson is rather remarkable. Ever since he became Minister of Agriculture his policy has been to encourage food production by cajolery, flattery and, above all, by the assurance of prices sufficient to ensure profits even to the least efficient of farmers. He himself has made an extraordinary admission. He told us in a recent broadcast that he had fixed farmers' prices at figures to give them more than a profit, for he wanted to help them to recover some of the capital they are said to have lost in the years before the war. Whether this is a justifiable use to make of public money is a point that we will not argue; but Mr. Hudson went on to say that he had miscalculated the costs of production so badly on two occasions, when price revision was going on, that farmers had received still further bonuses. Small wonder, then, that he has dug in now and refuses to help them to pay the five shillings a week which the Wages Board has added to the farm workers' wages. Possibly the Treasury may have stiffened his resistance, for farmers will do well to remember that the Inland Revenue now has precise information about the profits of agriculture, through the income tax returns, for the first time in history. No doubt the Committee on Public Expenditure will want to know how Mr. Hudson got so badly wrong with his prices. Did he consult the agricultural economists, and, if not, upon what advice did he act? But the farmers do not seem to have any grounds for biting the hand that has fed them.

The Grid and the Companies

The London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority has issued a memorandum which is in effect a telling reply to the recent manifesto of the power companies opposing public ownership. It is pointed out that over the country as a whole, whereas concerns attached to the power companies group charge the consumer 2.021d. per unit and other companies 2.104d., the municipally owned stations charge on the average only 1.529d. Some allowance has, no doubt, to be made for the fact that the municipalities have, on the whole, rather easier areas to deal with; but this advantage is by no means enough to explain the disparity, especially since the advent of the grid. The privately owned concerns are now hoping to defeat the demand for public ownership by reviving the proposals of the MacGowan Report for the reorganisation of the distributive side on terms which would both leave the larger private concerns in being and enable them to swallow up some of the municipal concerns; and the power companies are arguing against the co-ordination of generation in the hands of the Central Electricity Board. The truth, however, is that, if we want a rational system of charges over the country as a whole and a real development of supply in the more sparsely populated areas, unified ownership of the generating stations is indispensable, and there must be unified regional organisation on the distributive side. That either of these things can be secured under private ownership is clearly out of the question; and we have now in the Central Electricity Board a body which could be adapted both to take over generation on a national scale and to act as a co-ordinating centre for a regional system of distribution under public ownership. Cheap electricity is a vital need, in town and country alike; and socialisation is the only way of getting it.

Full Employment

We have now Lord Woolton's authority for the statement that the Government is making its reconstruction plans on a basis of "full employment." Sir John Anderson, in the Beveridge debate, was more cautious, and said only that the Government would do its best. We wonder what Lord Woolton has in his mind. Does he understand by "full employment" a state of things in which there are really rather more employers looking for workers than workers looking for jobs —which is what we understand by it—or does he define it as meaning an unemployed roll of anything up to 10 or even 12 per cent.—which was what appeared to be in the mind of the Government Actuary in drawing up his estimate of the cost of the Beveridge Report? Or is it possible that Lord Woolton means no more than that, after a short "dislocation interval," unemployment is not likely to be serious for some years after the war, because it will take some years to meet urgent arrears of need that will have to be met somehow, even if they cannot be met on an orthodox commercial footing? The real test of a "full employment" policy will come only when the emergency period is over and the world settles down again to the regular routine of production and exchange. Unless mass unemployment is to recur, then, we must plan to prevent it now, as an integral part of a long-term reconstruction policy. Can we take it that Lord Woolton means this? If so, we should like to see more signs of any plans calculated to make so good a New Year resolution effective. "Full employment" will not come merely by wishing for it; and if it does come, and the fear of the sack disappears, the changes in industrial relations will be profound. Sir William Beveridge, we know, is busy studying these problems. Are civil servants, who would have to cut Sir William dead in the Reform Club if they tried conscientiously to carry out their instruc-

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tions, really planning away on their own; or are they still only planning how best to defeat the planners?

A.S.S.E.T.

A.S.S.E.T.—the Association of Supervisory Staff and Engineering Technicians—has at last won "recognition" from the Engineering Employers' Federation. That is to say, it is now recognised as entitled to bargain collectively on behalf of its members. This is an important matter, for the employers, ever since the formation of the Amalgamated Engineers in the middle of the last century, have taken up the attitude that "staff" workers must neither combine nor enter into any relations with the Trade Union movement. The draughtsmen won recognition, in face of a similar objection, some time ago; but the employers still refused to admit the claims of the foremen and supervising staffs. Undoubtedly, the present change of attitude is due in part to the experience of Joint Production Committees during the war; but it is due much more to the stand which Mr. Bevin is taking as Minister of Labour against those employers who are still standing out against Trade Union rights. It was as an outcome of the last war that the railway Trade Unions beat down the railway companies' objection to Trade Unionism as inconsistent with railway "discipline," and that the seamen and other groups achieved a recognition which had been long denied. To-day, the joint stock banks and some of the insurance companies are still maintaining their refusal, along with a few big firms in the motor industry and some stragglers elsewhere. Mr. Bevin is said to be considering a Bill to deal with these outstanding cases; perhaps the engineering employers preferred coming to an agreement while they could to waiting to be coerced into meeting A.S.S.E.T., which maintains cordial relations with the A.E.U. and the other ordinary Trade Unions in the engineering and shipyard industries.

Prisons

Most of the advances in prison administration which were won in the last war seem to have been lost, for the time being, in this war. At least that is the conclusion reached from reading the stories of some prisoners of this war. *Prisoners' Circle* (Prison Medical Reform Council, 1*s*.) gives a very disturbing picture of inadequate medical treatment and the often callous attitude adopted to prisoners. Is there a reason why prisons should be filthy or why prisoners who are ill should not receive proper medical treatment? That applies to all prisoners, whether they are in gaol for ordinary crimes or for refusing military duties on conscientious grounds. Of course the authorities plead wartime difficulties with staff, food and facilities for medical care; and it is true enough that British prisons compare well with those of many other countries. But that is no reply, as anyone will agree who reads the account in this book of the atmosphere in a prison that has been bombed, and where the prisoners have been locked in their cells all through the raid. Again, in spite of the necessity for precautions against lead-swinging, is it also necessary to treat the prisoners as if illness was an offence punishable by neglect? Dirt, semi-starvation and almost non-existent A.R.P. cannot be justified on any grounds at all. The question now is not the reform of the prison system as a whole—that is a larger issue—but the immediate improvements which are possible. There is much that could be done with so little trouble to anybody. The Government has promised to clean up its military detention camps; must we organise a similar outcry about our civil prisons before anything is done?

WORK AND CAPACITY

WHAT are our masters thinking about our future? A little can be gleaned from the public speeches of politicians, but a good deal more can be derived from a critical reading of a report on the future of British industry which the Conservative Party published this week. *Work** is a substantial pamphlet on which the committee on post-war problems set up by the Conservative and Unionist Party organisation has been engaged since October, 1941. With other documents in the series it is to be "presented to the Leader of the Party." It is not a detailed programme of legislation; rather is it an attempt to sketch the aims which Conservatives have in view and the values they cherish.

At a first glance, one notes relative humanity and enlightenment in its approach to many of the problems of industry. Conservatives have become aware of what public opinion expects from a governing party. If fair words and lofty aspirations could realise themselves, some of these pages would give us most of what we ask. "The real task of industry," we are told, "is to create plenty" for every household in this island and the backward countries also. Better still, they realise that security is not enough. Work, as they put it, ought to mean more to the worker than "a colourless means of earning enough to live on." They stress, accordingly, his "status and responsibility." They want a development of Joint Production Committees. They like such experiments as the choice of an employee to sit on the board of directors. They are keen on technical education. They are for holidays with pay, for the guaranteed working week and for equal pay for equal work by women. They stress the need for more scientific research and admit candidly the past neglect of it by industry in this country. As for trade unions, so necessary are they that they would have to be created if they did not exist. In short, these Conservatives now commit themselves to a positive conception of the State. It has thrown over *laissez-faire*. It grasps, at least in words, that freedom from want depends on a policy of full employment. It is capable of realising that a worker who is merely a wage-earner and a commodity in the labour market is something less than a self-respecting human being. These—sincere or not—are the professions of the Committee: at any rate it understands what the electorate expects. What concerns us is rather the means on which it relies to achieve these ends.

Broadly, the argument of the report is that capitalism, which has served so well in the past, will serve as well, with minor adjustments, in the future. It dismisses public corporations, which it accuses of "sleepiness," almost as decidedly as nationalisation. It accepts the prolongation of wartime controls as a necessity during a "transitional period." But as normal conditions return, the case for the control will dwindle and the "preference of consumers" should again suffice to regulate industry. How far the report accepts as normal any constructive planning of industry by the State is far from clear. It does favour control over the location of new industries, as the Barlow Report demanded. In connection with this, it wants continuous surveys, which will uncover danger spots in particular areas. But with a few exceptions such as this, it demands a free field for private enterprise. It is aware that monopoly capital may impose exorbitant prices or unfair conditions of sale. For this it suggests as an adequate safeguard some machinery by which charges against trusts and price rings could be "authoritatively examined." On this and kindred subjects it assumes in its readers an improbable degree of simplicity. It maintains, for example, that international cartels covering industrial products are a positive advantage to consumers as well as to producers, "provided always that their regulating purpose is steadily expansionist and not selfishly restrictionist." Where are the mythical cartels that answer this definition? One might as well say that the wolf is a useful animal, provided always that it behaves like a dog.

The reader will have grasped by now the inner significance of this cleverly drafted document. It offers a specious façade of welfare, behind which the familiar power-structure of the pre-war world shall govern industry with a minimum of interference. This is most obvious in the pages it devotes to the problem of unemployment. It has little to say about the means by which mass-consumption can be maintained and increased. It has, of course, nothing at all to say about the proportion which the total paid out in wages bears to the total value of the product of industry. It is "sceptical" about the value of public works as a regulator, though it does not dismiss them as absolutely as Tory Governments did in the period between the two wars. It makes a suggestion which we do not fully grasp—that attention be given to "financing the bulk purchase of universally desirable household goods." Does this mean State credits to manufacturers? But its central formula is that the Government shall "adopt measures which will cause *private* capital expenditure to remain steady at a high level" (italics ours). The chief of these is, we gather, the adoption of differential rates of taxation, which will foster the accumulation of reserves of capital by companies, which they may use to expand their equipment. There is a sinister hint here of a policy by which the leviathans of monopoly capital may grow greater and more powerful still. They do not use their reserves solely to expand their equipment. They use them, as often, to buy up and swallow competitors.

There is a simple answer to all this, if the parties of the Left have the wit to lay it before the electorate. The essence of this Conservative view of the future is that power shall reside where it lay before. From first to last no guarantees are offered and no machinery is proposed which will ensure that industry, under private ownership and control, shall fulfil its "real task" of creating plenty. It may be argued, as this report argues, that in the last century and a half capitalism has steadily raised the real wages of a rapidly growing population. The credit of that miracle falls rather to science and invention, to steam and electricity. What can be said for private capitalism is that it exploited the gifts of science, during the period of competitive enterprise, with ruthless energy, albeit at a heavy cost in waste and suffering. To-day, under conditions of monopoly, the balance has swung the other way. It suppresses invention almost as often as it uses it: it dreads abundance: it follows, in most of the basic industries, like steel, a restrictionist policy which forbids us to create or to enjoy more than a fraction of the wealth that might be ours.

Once again, for the second time in a generation, war has taught us that in times of peace we run all our industries on low gear. We have before us an arresting diagram which the New York *Nation* (November 27) presents to its readers. Starting in 1929, the last year of the boom, it shows that American industry then turned out goods and services of all kinds, ranging from food and clothes to cars and ships, to a value of 83 billion dollars. This was halved in the slump. The recovery, up to the outbreak of this war, was only partial. Since then the yearly total has shot up until, in 1943, at an estimated figure of 155 billions, the pre-war record is nearly doubled. Reckonings based on American conditions need some adjustment before we can adopt their moral. But the broad sense of the thing is plain and it shatters the Conservative case. America can put seven million men in the prime of life into the army, and still double her year's output of real wealth. Then what becomes in normal times of this unused capacity? With that question the Left has its answer to the Conservatives. If we continue under the old management we face the future with one arm tied behind our backs. An economy of plenty we never shall enjoy until, here by social ownership and there by creative control, we make an end of the era of monopoly capitalism.

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* *Work*, price 6d. The Conservative and Unionist Party Organisation, 24, Old Queen Street, S.W.1.

HITLER'S UNOFFICIAL ALLIES

German imperialism has long dreamed of turning South America into a great colony whose natural wealth and expanding markets would provide a complement to the industries of Ruhr and Rhine. The Nazis tried to make that dream a reality. Had they won the war in Europe, they intended to seize Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay next, relying in all three countries on the large centres of German population and native fascist groups for the internal revolt that they have always combined with their invasions. The more ambitious plan vanishes as their military success declines, but their widespread and efficient organisation remains, not only as a system of espionage, sabotage, arms dumps and illegal military training, but also as a source of political dissension and confusion. Their purpose in Latin America is now twofold: to cause the utmost hindrance and embarrassment to the United Nations and to establish a fascist base in the Western Hemisphere from which they can infiltrate into the other republics and, eventually, into the United States. Mr. Cordell Hull's comments upon the recent revolt in Bolivia shows that Washington is at last awakening to the menace of fascism in the Americas. "This hemisphere," he said, "is under sinister and subversive attack by the Axis, assisted by some elements within the hemisphere."

Nazi intrigue and disruption is made possible by the difficulties that have been imposed on the South American States by the war. Nearly all of them are peculiarly dependent upon foreign trade for their economic stability. Its normal course is now interrupted; the machinery which was purchased with the proceeds of the export of raw materials is no longer available, and the South American primary producers are piling up huge credit balances with British and American industry. Naturally, this has thrown a considerable strain on social structures which were, at best, always distorted and unbalanced. In particular, it has aggravated the struggle between the industrial-financial interests and the great landowners. This class division is also complicated by an intense nationalism which springs from the national revolutionary tradition of the last century, whose momentum is not yet exhausted. The varying fortunes of the European war also find an echo South of Panama, and contribute to the present unrest. While it appeared that Germany might win, the argument ran, it was unwise to quarrel with the Power that would control the main channels of post-war trade with Europe. Moreover, large sections of both the agrarian and commercial interests sympathised with fascist precept and fascist practice. But geography and the Red Army conspired against them. Instead of airborne divisions, only a few hundred Gestapo organisers crossed the Atlantic. The choice was not between the Axis and the Allies, but between the Allies and an uneasy neutrality. And the popular demand for active assistance to the democracies was becoming almost irresistible. So at the Rio conference all the Latin American States decided to break relations with the Axis. Reactionary and progressive, one after another fulfilled that agreement. Only Argentina remained neutral.

The Argentine, however, is a special and serious case. It has become the first firm foothold of genuine fascism on the other side of the Atlantic, and the successes of its governing clique of generals are as powerful a form of influence upon its neighbours as direct intervention. The December putsch in Bolivia showed that clearly enough. Not only did its leader, Paz Estensoro, visit General Ramirez two months ago, but the character and probable outcome of this new revolt have paralleled the events in Buenos Aires last June to an extraordinary extent. In both countries nationalism is extreme almost to the point of fanaticism; in both the military caste share with the landowners a hatred of capitalism and finance, and both dislike the Pan-American idea, which they regard as a cloak for dollar imperialism. Argentina especially has long opposed to this the concept of Latin-Americanism in which the leading part would be hers by right. That Bolivia remains at war with the Axis while the Argentine continues its policy of dubious neutrality is a difference that serves to emphasise the danger. For at the present stage of the war an open *volte-face* against the Allies by any State as vulnerable as these is highly improbable. What is possible is that Bolivian adherence to the United Nations and a nominal break with the Axis by Argentina might serve as a cloak for more far-reaching and sinister internal developments.

Since the Argentine offers an example of the latest and most sophisticated form of Nazi fifth column tactics, the sequence of events there during the last six months is important. In June a military junta seized power in Buenos Aires. This act was not altogether unexpected. The Castillo Government which was overthrown was unstable even in the early part of 1942, when a delegation from the Argentine Congress visiting the United States had predicted a revolt similar to that which later occurred. How long could the Government, which from December, 1941, had ruled by decree under a state of siege, hold out? Its survival depended solely upon the lack of unity amongst its opponents. Representative of the industrial and commercial interests, it had pursued a vacillating pro-Axis foreign policy and a corrupt domestic administration. Disliked on the one hand by the military leaders whose nationalist ardour was outraged at the sight of their non-neutral neighbours receiving American arms under Lease-Lend, and by the landlord *estancieros*, who were badly hit by the economic crisis, and, on the other, hated by the democratic parties, who wanted honest government and an anti-fascist policy, Castillo remained President by default of the opposition. The Radicals, Socialists, Communists, and the 400,000-strong trade unions seemed unable to reach agreement among themselves. The eventual solution was the one alternative to Castillo that was practical in these circumstances. Only if some issue arose which could provide mass support for the numerically weak alliance between the generals and landlords could Castillo be overthrown.

The immediate cause of the *coup d'état* was the prospect of a united front of the popular parties, which would enable them to defeat Castillo at the autumn elections, in spite of the corrupt electoral system. June 4th, the date of the revolt, is significant. For on that day the parties were to have met and chosen their presidential candidates. Castillo had already nominated his, Dr. Costas, a prominent industrialist. For the *estancieros* and the army it was rapidly becoming a case of heads they lost, tails their opponents won. Political tension was nearing breaking point. In a landslide victory for the democrats, landlords and financiers might go down together. Under the slogans of free elections and a new foreign policy, compliance with international obligations and collaboration with other American States, a handful of troops occupied the capital with almost no resistance. There is no doubt that everyone thought the tide had turned; few suspected that the army had marched to power on the shoulders of the people. Only *La Hora*, the Communist newspaper, came out with a denunciation of the provisional Government. What uneasiness existed was directed at General Rawson's inclusion of two well-known fascist civilians in his cabinet: José Maria Rosas and Don Horacio Calderon, publisher of the Nazi paper *Pampero*. Within forty-eight hours there was a shuffle among the leaders, and Ramirez replaced the incautious Rawson, who had almost revealed the real purpose of the revolt. Ramirez, a braggadocio with a genius for double-talk, formed a purely military cabinet, dissolved Congress—scene of stormy struggle over the neutrality policy—and proclaimed that "democracy" had arrived at last.

Allied circles soon swallowed the bait. The facade of a pro-Ally putsch by the Army was elaborate and clever. Ramirez knew that London and Washington would not question his internal aims too closely. All he wanted was recognition as a Government capable of maintaining "order"; he soon got it. First from his neighbours and from the Axis Powers; then, on June 11th, from Britain and America. Externally secure, Ramirez turned his attention to domestic questions. A series of demagogic measures—price control, nationalisation of a few transport concerns, a limited attack on corruption, promises of social reforms—were introduced at the same time as he began, under the guise of attacking "Communism," a vicious campaign against the trade unions and the democratic parties. Anti-semitic legislation and propaganda are, together with all the other stock-in-trade of fascism, a distinctive feature of the new regime. Since that first rash act of recognition the record of Allied relations with Argentina is most unhappy. Britain has concluded two trade pacts "devoid of political significance," but so favourable to Ramirez that he has used them to bolster up his Government with the promise of prosperity. And the isolated protests by Mr. Hull or President Roosevelt have merely helped Ramirez to fan the flames of anti-Yankee sentiment.

The Argentine people have done what they ca to aid the cause of the democracies; over half million were actively associated with relief an aid committees; hundreds of them are fightin in our armed forces. The workers in Argentin have secured the release of certain of their leader by mass strikes; there have been repeated studen demonstrations; thousands of leading labou leaders and intellectuals have been interned fo their opposition to this fresh fascist offensiv against the Americas. But, though oppositio works hard beneath the surface, it is still politicall so immature that it may again be stamped out jus as the progressive parties in Italy after the las war were crushed by Fascism. And what is tru of Argentina and Bolivia to-day may be true Peru and Brazil and Chile to-morrow. We ma very well see a native brand of Fascism develo in Latin America while our energies are occupie with its European parent.

FOOD AS A CLASS WEAPON

[*We print this article with acknowledgements to the International Transport Worker's Journal, in which it appeared in September,* 1943.]

The language of the Atlantic Charter, which promises self-determination to all the peoples of Europe, is as generous as it is explicit. It ought to mean that they will be free to choose, not merely their form of government, but their economic system. Will Italians and Greeks really be free, if they so wish, to depose their kings? Will Hungarian peasants be free to satisfy their land hunger? Will Germans be allowed to socialise heavy industry and break up the Junker estates? The usual answer that comes from the White House and Downing Street is that in due course free elections will be held everywhere to ascertain the people's will. Only a rather ol fashioned Liberal will be content with th assurance. In the interval, through Amgot, t economic controls, and the distribution of fo and raw materials, the two English-speaki Powers, linked in an uneasy and distant relatio ship with Russia, have ample means to influen the electorates and their leaders. They hold their hands the keys of work and even of li itself. By denying or stinting food, raw materi and credits to popular or revolutionary parti while reserving these favours to conservati groups, they can do much to buttress the class-structure throughout Europe. This m seem to some readers a cynical and far-fetch suggestion. There is, however, a preced which should put us on our guard. Economic pressure was used in precisely these ways to stave off social change after the last war.

Part of the story was told soon after the events by the leading actor in it. Mr. T. T. C. Gregory was the chief lieutenant of Mr. Hoover in his relief organisation and had charge of Central and Eastern Europe. His narrative appeared in three articles in the American periodical *The World's Work* (in April, May and June, 1921). The editor introduced him as " one of the new race of constructive American lawyers that has brought so much of genius and imagination to big business." He exhibited, we are told, an "almost ruthless use of power" and proved himself " a real dictator." The whole story can be told in a sentence. Here it is, in the editor's words: "The (Hoover) Commission became involved in a hand-to-hand battle with the Red movement. Using economic pressure—the lever of food as its only weapon—it defeated Bolshevism and saved central and south-eastern Europe in civilisation."

A nightmare haunted the victors in the first winter after the armistice. Germany lay prostrate but " another greedy and menacing Power," as Mr. Gregory puts it, " all but succeeded where the Kaiser failed." The Poles, he reminds us, with French aid, flung back the Red Army in 1920, " but one year earlier without that ghastly sacrifice of blood and treasure that was required to save Warsaw, a more dramatic and perhaps a more significant check was given Bolshevism in Hungary, where a handful of Americans, employing only economic weapons, brought down the Government of Bela Kun, and put a sudden end to the dreams of Lenin for immediate European domination. I suggest that this achievement was more significant than the military repulses of the Red battalions in Poland, for the reason that it proved indisputably the power of food and economic factors as modern weapons for the curtailing of unconscionable political ambitions and for perserving international peace. To paraphrase the adage, ' Bread is mightier than the sword '."

Mr. Gregory tells us that Herbert Hoover was the first to grasp the political importance of food. All the Great Powers were hastening " to lay the foundations for economic penetration and political influence in the newly formed territories." A struggle for prestige followed, against "the experienced and far-seeing British." America, however, alone possessed a surplus of food. A duel without quarter was fought between Mr. Hoover and Lord Reading, which left the American in control of relief. " I am trying," as Mr. Hoover put it, " to keep our allies out of Uncle Sam's pockets and I'm having a hell of a job." That may have been his way of saying that " relief " was run from first to last on strictly commercial lines. " Every pound of food and every piece of material distributed was to be paid for."

Mr. Gregory, who is not troubled by modesty describes the difficulties he had to overcome during this chaotic winter, when food had to be transported over closed frontiers and paid for in deteriorating currencies. " For weal or woe, in this crisis, we dominated Central and South-Eastern Europe . . . Salvation lay only in our Mission." Hoover was placed in charge of all the railways in Central Europe. On one occasion he so far relaxed the blockade, which was still maintained against Germany, as to sell to her Government $200 millions worth of American food " for gold in hand paid." On Hoover's motive in all these transactions Mr. Gregory dwells again and again: " He was feeding and succouring Balkanised Central Europe only as an incident in the fight he was making to throw back the wave of Bolshevism."

Mr. Gregory now explains how Bela Kun, on 21st March, 1919, upset Count Karolyi's Government and created a short-lived Soviet system. The Allies in Paris had discredited Karolyi; for they either would not or could not stop the attacks which the Czechs and Rumanians were making on Hungary. Magyar patriotism rallied behind Kun, who raised an army that fought well to defend its native land. " The salvation of Central Europe " now depended, according to Mr. Gregory, on destroying Kun. Marshal Foch drew up a military plan for his overthrow, for which he demanded 250,000 men. The Supreme Council agreed in principle, but pigeon-holed his recommendations.

What chiefly concerned the Allies was to prevent the spread of Bolshevism to Vienna. Kun's Minister to the Austrian Republic had been expelled for an attempt to foster revolution. In his place came the Socialist, Dr. Boehm, who had been for a time a general in the army of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Mr. Gregory gives a description of Boehm, the most modest and honourable of men, which none of his friends will recognise; nor can I accept the account he gives of the part he played in the " conspiracy " which the Hoover Mission engineered. Gregory acted throughout with the British military commissioner, Colonel Cunningham, " a sportsman and a gentleman," and Prince Borghesi, " more like an English squire than an Italian diplomat."

The " conspiracy " (Mr. Gregory's word for it) consisted in inducing the moderate Hungarian Social Democratic leaders to overthrow Bela Kun in return for a promise that the Allies would support, recognise and feed them. They told Boehm that they would make him " a deathless figure on history's pages—the hero who struck the bloody hand of Soviet Communism from the throat of an exhausted nation." Boehm so far consented as to bring secretly to Vienna two of Kun's Socialist colleagues, Agoston and Haubricht.

The negotiations resulted in an agreement which Hoover backed and presented to the Supreme Council. Its eight points may be summarised thus: Agoston, Haubricht and their party colleagues were to assume the dictatorship, dismiss the Kun Government, repudiate Bolshevism and put an end to the confiscation of property. This dictatorship was to function until a government " representative of all classes could be formed." On the side of the Allies the " raising of the blockade " was promised and " immediate steps " were " to be taken by the Entente to supply Hungary with food and coal and to assist in opening up the Danube." A vital clause was that there were to be " no political prosecutions."

" The plot," Mr. Gregory tells us, " hinged on the labour element," which he describes as " liberal and democratic in complexion." Hoover won over the Supreme Council which signed and issued a declaration endorsing the eight points of his agreement.

Bela Kun's government had done some brilliant pioneering social work, nor was it guilty of much bloodshed; but it was now in grave difficulties. Mr. Gregory, whose history is as sketchy as it is biased, passes over most of them in silence. Czechs and Rumanians were still attacking and with the latter were the Hungarian Whites. The peasants were sullen, because what they wanted was the division and not the socialisation of the great estates. Budapest and the smaller towns were desperately hungry and the lack of coal threatened catastrophe.

The food shortage gave Mr. Gregory his chance. Two or three times the assistant food administrator of Soviet Hungary had begged him to sell food. Mr. Gregory had refused: " I told him from the first that we would have no dealings of any kind with Bolshevism." But a further development of the " plot " he was " hatching " now occurred to Mr. Gregory, which had in it, he tells us, an element of " comic opera." Forty-eight hours before Agoston was due to seize power in Budapest, he sent for this Hungarian official in Vienna and told the unsuspecting man that he had changed his mind and was now ready to sell him food. In fact, on this day, 28th July, he had neither food nor funds; for the Hoover Mission was being wound up. But there were supplies of food in private hands in Trieste which he could command. He, therefore, demanded that the Hungarian should pay " in cold cash " and " real money " a sum of $1,000,000. He made the man promise not to " say anything to his Government about this trade." " There were tears in his eyes and I knew I could trust him." Next day in a clothes basket the " real money " was duly handed over, and Mr. Gregory ordered three train loads of fats to be made ready to leave for Budapest on receipt of a wire from himself. He had, however, no intention of allowing them to reach the Government which had paid for them in advance in " cold cash."

That evening in Budapest, at a meeting of the Soviet, Agoston, by arrangement with Mr. Gregory, carried out his *coup d'état*. He had surrounded the hall with his armed partisans and after a useless appeal from Bela Kun, he proclaimed a temporary dictatorship under himself, Haubricht and Garami. " The pledge of the Allies was read. It was cheered vociferously. Budapest was turned into a carnival city that night." At ten o'clock next morning, Mr. Gregory reports, his trains began to arrive and " within a few hours the people were eating the bread and the fats that the Bolsheviki, all unknowing and certainly never conscious of the irony of the situation, had bought through me."

Something else, however, was on its way to Budapest just behind the food trains. The Rumanian Army, under instructions from Paris, occupied the city, looted it systematically, and put the Whites in power. After their brief success, which had lasted only a few days, Agoston and Haubricht were flung into jail. Mr. Gregory claims that he procured their release. The original idea of setting up the Archduke Joseph as dictator was promptly abandoned. The Americans were active in protesting against this detail of the reaction, but I think the credit must be shared with the Czechs.

So ended Mr. Hoover's " conspiracy." He used a promise of recognition and an offer of food, for which Bela Kun paid, to induce his socialist dupes to break up the Soviet Government. The food duly arrived. But so far from recognising the Agoston Government, the Allies set loose the Rumanian Army to upset it. The Allies had undertaken that there should be " no prosecutions." What happened was Horthy's White Terror, which cost the Hungarian Left five thousand lives, to say nothing of tortures and imprisonments.

There are several morals to be drawn from this story. The chief of them is that even when they dole out relief the statesmen of the capitalistic Powers will act on the principle that " All's fair in class war." H. N. Brailsford

A LONDON DIARY

The story goes that after listening to a colleague's speech Winston Churchill said that it contained every cliché except "Please adjust your dress." I thought of this as we turned off Mr. Attlee's flat and worthy New Year broadcast. But the odd thing about Attlee is that while he actually commits less platitudes than most responsible politicians, he makes every remark, even a witticism, sound like a bromide. Reading his broadcast afterwards I saw that though he had not committed himself, he had in effect displayed a hope that the Coalition Government would continue after the war. Lord Woolton, who came out strongly in the same sense, would also prefer to search for reconstruction compromises without the complications of party warfare. But then Lord Woolton is not a party man—with Anderson he may be Churchill's choice for the inner coalition Cabinet after the war. But Attlee (though it needs an effort to remember it) is the leader of a Party committed to Socialism. Without doubt the rank and file will insist on the Labour Party fighting an election at the end of the war, and the fact that Mr. Attlee is already making it clear that he would prefer a Coalition means that he could not help being a half-hearted and defeatist leader of Labour if an election on party lines actually comes.

* * *

I hear people say that the Labour Party is in a cleft stick. If the Labour Party were to fight a coupon election that would destroy it as decisively as the 1918 election did the Liberals. On the other hand, if they fight an election in the moment of victory it is assumed that Mr. Churchill and the Tories will have things all their own way. The best solution, if Labour could manage it, would be an election some months after victory. Millions who support Winston as a war leader have grave doubts about him "for the peace." But of course the real crux is whether the Labour Party can look like a convincing alternative to the Coalition, of which everyone will very soon be tired. Labour candidates who have the guts to stand against the war passions of the moment and advocate a decent peace, and point out that the Conservative cry of "food, work and homes" means no more than "homes for heroes" last time, can reassure themselves with the knowledge that the post-election reaction of the country in their favour will be very strong and very swift. I do not fear that Labour will lack opportunity; but rather that it may not know how to use it.

* * *

Splendid professional success, a host of devoted friends, a tireless sense of fun—Lutyens had all of these and yet he struck me as ill-starred. Perhaps deep down he thought so himself, which would explain his passion for incessant joking. He was much the most gifted English architect of our time. (Of that I feel sure, though it is impossible to judge his stature without having seen his Delhi.) But his work during the last twenty years has been usually mediocre and sometimes downright bad. Possibly his Catholic cathedral at Liverpool may turn out a success, though some of the detail recently exhibited is monstrous. At present his reputation depends (apart from Delhi) on such early works as the Golders Green group and the country houses. It is always sad when an artist diminishes instead of developing, but Lutyens suffered from a still graver misfortune. He lived in a period with which he had no sympathy. His notion of architecture was narrowly aristocratic, and his work is best described as the last gallant flicker of the Grand Manner. He loved ornament in an age that has neither an idiom of ornament nor a feeling for it. Because of his borrowings from Wren, he is sometimes too easily dismissed as a mere *pasticheur*. In fact he was no great scholar, and had little interest in the masterpieces of Byzantine or Italian building. The gift that distinguished him from his rivals was not erudition, but a consummate sense of proportion, the power to create spatial harmonies. This placed him at the head of his profession. President of the Royal Academy, he regarded painting with genial cynicism, not liking bad pictures any better than good ones. His antipathy to contemporary developments and needs in architecture made his influence in later years regrettable, but earlier he had tried to recall his colleagues to certain decencies, and in any case he deserves to be judged not as an influence but as a remarkable artist.

* * *

Americans, who have far more German prisoners in their country than we have in ours, ask me disquieting questions about the mental atmosphere of allied prison camps. Most people, both in America and in England, take it for granted that Nazi views would be severely discouraged in camps and that those who have democratic ideas would be in charge. Obviously, this opportunity for selecting Germans who may be useful for re-education purposes after the war is unique. But my friends tell me that their impression of what is being done is precisely the opposite. They say that there is not enough well-trained Allied personnel to look after the camps, and that those to whom prisoners are entrusted are only concerned to avoid trouble. The easiest way is to allow a few efficient Nazi officers to run the camps themselves; then the Authorities need not know anything about it if anti-Hitler or "subversive" sentiments are severely repressed and only Hitlerite views expressed. One friend of mine went so far as to say that he believed the most completely Nazi places in the world were Allied prisoner of war camps. If this remark were only one-quarter true it would be a frightful scandal. What is the use of talking about setting up democratic institutions in Germany or re-educating Germans after the war, if we do not even see to-day that they experience the mental climate of democracy when they are in our hands?

* * *

In this war the Friends' Ambulance Unit has looked after the wounded and homeless, the sick and the starving on a score of fronts, and as I read in its fourth annual report its recent record of work in the Middle East, and Syria, Ethiopia, India and China, and its plans for continuing relief after the war, I am led to ask how far this kind of voluntary service may not extend into a menacing future, which will continue for many years to need the help of the disinterested, trained internationally, minded men and women. I see it as possibly the nucleus of another new "Order"—a twentieth century order of Lay Friars, working under discipline with a pledge to relieve suffering.

* * *

I got out of the train at Oxford. It was Saturday afternoon and the platform was crowded. Just as I was giving up my ticket a man, who had been sitting opposite to me, arrived breathless holding a parcel. "You must have left this behind," he said, "it doesn't belong to anyone in the carriage now," and he dashed back to the train. It was a small white parcel with no label and no name. It did not belong to me; but I could see nothing to do but open it. It contained one cold, cooked partridge. Recalling the people who had been in the carriage I have since decided that it must belong to a lady who got out at Reading. I am sure she was taking it home to an invalid mother, and I feel conscious-striken about it. But what is the correct procedure when you are given a cold partridge on Oxford station?

* * *

The Fabian Society celebrated its sixtieth birthday on Tuesday night. Ellen Wilkinson and Harold Laski expressed in their speeches the deep regret that everyone felt for the loss of George Ridley, an honest trade union and Labour leader, unusually popular. Listening to the speeches I found myself most interested in de Brouckère, a splendid survivor of the best days of the Social Democrats. He could recall the surprise of Continental Socialists when they learnt in the early days of Fabianism that British intellectuals could also be practical politicians. He urged the special value of a Socialist organisation pledged to seek the truth irrespective of political consequences. He spoke for hundreds of exiles when he thanked the Fabian Society for the work it had done for European Socialists during the war. Emil Davies told some good stories of the Webbs and Shaw and others. I liked best the story of the Webbs going to an opera for once in ten years (because they had been given tickets) and coming home thoroughly pleased. They explained that they had happened to be sitting near to Lloyd George and Sir Herbert Samuel, and had been able to have a most useful conversation about the social effects of sickness in pregnancy.

* * *

Afterwards Margaret Cole told me that she had found in an old copy of the *Fabian News* another almost equally pretty example of Fabianism. It was a review of a play, and it read like this: "While in no way didactic, this piece provides an excellent answer to the question so frequently asked: 'Given good management, what is wrong with the general mixed workhouse?'" CRITIC

FOREIGN OFFICE MUSING

"A pro-Allied coup d'état in Bulgaria is reported from Berne, says the 'New York Times.'"—Evening Standard. January 4th.

A NEWS-FLASH to-day is reported
From Sofia, through New York and Berne,
A rumour (no doubt much distorted)
That Bulgaria is just on the turn.
Though evidence so far is scanty
It would be to the Office a blow,
If the Government, formerly "anti,"
Should now become "pro."

The news, still without confirmation,
Would be most unwelcome, if true,
Of such a transformed situation
We hold a disparaging view.
Sofia's regime, though unstable,
Was not meant, as yet, to be changed,
And the whole Foreign Office time-table
Would thus be deranged.

It would be little short of disaster
If revolt of a popular type
Made Commanders in Cairo move faster,
Before dispositions were ripe.
Political warfare's direction
New angles would have to discuss;
The unspeakable Bulgar's protection
Devolving on us.

The demands of Algiers and Apulia
Have stretched all our trained personnel,
And their functions precise and peculiar,
Would cover to Sofia as well.
We would have to arrange occupation
On quite unfamiliar ground,
And currency notes (for inflation)
Would have to be found.

Bulgarian-speaking officials
Would be called for the Old Guard's support—
An AMGOT (with censored initials)
And initials are now running short.
The Axis should plainly relieve us
And keep Balkan order and law—
To burdens already most grievous,
This adds the last straw.

In propping ex-enemy Powers
We find that the going is rough,
And our satellite windfalls, in showers,
Already are more than enough.
We deprecate any idea
Of Bulgaria changing its side,
And we trust the bad news from Sofia
Will soon be denied. SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to L. A. Richardson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

An Italian prisoner of war, wearing his brown spotted uniform, went into a cinema at Kettering, Northants, yesterday and saw the show.

He walked through an adjoining café into the cinema, accompanied by a man in civilian clothes. People having lunch there complained to the management.—*Daily Mail.*

The Regional Petroleum Office allowed the most notorious poacher in my neighbourhood no less than *fifty-six* gallons of petrol a month; fortunately the Bench of which I have honour to be chairman was able to suspend his activities for 12 months for being drunk when driving a car. But in the same week the same office refused the application of one of my fellow magistrates for *two* gallons a month to enable him to attend the court to hear the case. How long must we remain the toads beneath the bureaucratic harrow? —Letter in *The Field.*

Hardy (Thomas), Tess of The D'Urbervilles a Pure Woman. *Portrait*, cr. 8vo (trifle loose) 1892. 6s.—*From a catalogue of second-hand books*

A SERMON ON WHISKY

THE longer one lives, the more one is impressed by the numerousness of the progeny of the unrepentant thief. His descendants are to be found in all lands—at least, in all civilised lands—and for centuries have intermarried freely and indifferently with the stocks of Shem, Ham and Japhet. It has been said that there are probably more thieves in the world to-day than at any previous time in history. Progress has lumbered ahead, but the thief has always stepped nimbly aside and has scarcely even been splashed by the mud from its wheels. He belongs to a special breed like the gypsies. His is a nation within a nation, arrogating to itself minority rights and even possessing in thieves' Latin the remnants of a national language.

It used to be thought by many humane people that poverty is the chief cause of theft. But this is doubtful. A multitude of minor cases of theft have obviously been due to poverty, but those who commit thefts of this kind are thieves only by accident. The true thief, it seems to me, is in the grip of a ruling passion. He is the victim of a vice, like the drug-taker or the dipsomaniac, and it must be remembered that a taste for stealing is much more natural than a taste for drugs or strong liquor. He steals largely for the love of stealing. He could, no doubt, put up an excellent defence of himself against the charge of self-indulgence, as De Quincey did when Coleridge accused him of taking opium for pleasure. But every vice has its attendant pleasure, and this in the end becomes a sufficient reason for continuing in it. The young thief may begin, shyly, timorously, with greed or covetousness as his principal motive, but as his vice grows in him he finds in it, I am sure, an almost sensual enjoyment. I do not mean to suggest that greed and covetousness cease to be powerful motives, but merely that, were it not for the enjoyment of stealing, there would be a good deal less dishonesty in the world.

Consider, for example, the prevalence of theft during the last few years, in which wages have been unusually high. Again and again the thieves brought into court have proved to be youths who were earning enough money to provide them, not only with the necessaries of life, but with more luxuries than their fathers ever enjoyed at the same age. Stealing with them was manifestly a luxurious pleasure. They stole as magpies steal. Theft—at least, so I imagine—provided them with a kind of Satanic fun.

The continued popularity of theft is all the more surprising, since of all the vices it has had the fewest commenders. In the Old Testament we find men who have broken many of the Commandments held up to us as examples, but no one is well spoken of who broke the Commandment "Thou shalt not steal." Moses was an assassin, Aaron a maker of graven images, and David broke as many of the Commandments as a good man is likely to break. Nowhere, however, in Holy Writ is an ex-thief presented as a model for the Sunday-schools. Jacob, perhaps, came nearer being a thief than any of the other patriarchs; but even his offence might be classified as wangling rather than theft, and in any case nobody likes Jacob. The English poets for a time did their best to make a thief popular in the person of Robin Hood; but in order to do so they had first to strip him of all the vicious attributes of thieving. Robin Hood of the ballads is scarcely a more reprehensible figure than a Chancellor of the Exchequer levying surtax on those who can afford it. As chivalrous as a Knight of the Round Table, he would have hanged any of his followers who had snatched a woman's handbag. So innocent were his crimes that a well-known clergyman of the day could, with a good conscience, share in his spoils. Qualities of the same kind seem to have persisted among the *élite* of English highwaymen till the eighteenth century. The thief of impeccable morals and manners, however, exists mainly in fiction.

In spite of the efforts of a few modern novelists, the word "thief" has become more and more a term of contempt. When an indignant peer racked his brains to discover the worst thing he could say of Mr. Lloyd George at the time of the great Budget controversy, the most damning thing he could think of to say was that Mr. Lloyd George was the kind of man who would steal the pennies from a blind beggar's tin. He even went further, if I remember right, and said that Mr. Lloyd George was the kind of man who would steal the birdseed from a canary. With the whole vocabulary of vituperation to choose from, this product of the public schools decided that "thief," however loosely used, was the most opprobrious epithet in the English language.

Yet, if the excuses of a large and respectable body of thieves are admissible, the thief is often less to be blamed than to be pitied. Seldom does a shop-lifter appear in court without explaining that she—it is usually she—did what she did under an uncontrollable impulse. If this is true, we must agree that it is as natural for some women to steal as it is for some birds to migrate. Again and again it has been made clear that the shop-lifter had no rational motive for stealing—that she was a woman of good position and a good income. It may be that there is a kind of magnetic fluid in the shop-lifter's system that insensibly attracts other people's goods. That the impulse is widespread is shown by the fact that every great stores has to keep a staff of detectives to protect its wares from the uncontrollable impulses of its clientele. Judges and magistrates as a rule are disinclined to accept the theory of the uncontrollable impulse, but, if the phrase were altered to "a not-easily-controllable impulse," I think that the thieves might have something to be said for them. The elderly gentleman who steals a fountain-pen from the shop-counter may not have the slightest desire for a new fountain-pen; he merely feels that he must steal something; and the charming woman from the suburbs has, I suspect, few preferences among hair-brushes, vanity bags, or bottles of cough mixture. All is fish that comes under her spacious fur coat. She will steal even a book rather than steal nothing.

How far the vice of stealing has penetrated aristocratic circles I do not know. I fancy, however, that if a duke or a duchess, a marquis or a marchioness, is caught in the full bloom of kleptomania, their errors can be concealed from the public like the depredations of a bank clerk. The bourgeoisie, to which I myself belong and which (by itself at least) is believed to be the most virtuous and Puritanical stratum of society, has certainly been honeycombed with shop-lifting ever since shops were opened. As it is to-day, so it was a hundred years ago. A century-old cutting from the *Times*, reprinted the other day, made it clear that the Victorians were tempted in this matter like as we are. The cutting ran:

> Harriet Fuller, a young woman of very respectable appearance, was brought before Mr. Traill (at Union Hall) charged with stealing a roll of riband from the shop of William Tarn, linen draper, of Newington Causeway. . . . Mr. Traill said that, however respectable the prisoner might be, he was bound to send her for trial.
>
> Charges of this kind are so often made that ladies should be especially careful never to place a muff or handkerchief upon the counter, or to allow any portion of their dress to rest upon it. . . . Unfortunately, no rank or character is exempt from the imputation of the crime charged against the unhappy defendant in this case, and should any accident, however unavoidable, occur, the presumption of crime is so strong that, a defence being necessarily impossible, a conviction for theft, with all its dreadful consequences, is almost inevitable.

From this it appears that woman's dress is in itself an incitement to kleptomania. A man, in his austere uniform, has few opportunities to stow away even a roll of riband without drawing attention to himself. Perhaps, if men still wore togas, kleptomania would be as common with one sex as with the other.

Besides the broad-minded kleptomaniac who will steal anything, it is obvious that there are specialists in theft who are perfectly honest men outside, as it were, their own beat. Of such are collectors, many of them—collectors of first editions, of old prints, of coins, probably even of flint arrowheads. I know men whom I would trust among the riches of the Bank of England, but on whom I would keep a suspicious eye if they were within arm's length of a first edition of an early D. H. Lawrence. Not that I care for first editions; if I were given a first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* I should feel pleasantly possessive for about twenty-four hours, but the pleasure would not last. I should gradually even forget on which shelf the book stood and should not notice that it had been stolen till, wishing to pay a debt, I meant to sell it. Most of my first editions have been stolen. I console myself for their loss by reflecting that, at least, they have fallen into the hands of those who appreciate them better than I ever did.

How much more difficult it is to forgive the wartime thief who steals one's whisky on the railways! Thrice I have suffered from his depredations—I whom my wine merchant allows a ration of about a bottle every three months. This time the thief had opened the carton, drunk the bottle, broken it and put the fragments of glass back among the straw as evidence that it had been broken in transit. As the straw was not damp, however, and as it gave off not the faintest aroma of whisky, it was clear that man as usual had been vile. Besides, there were three unbroken bottles of Algerian wine in the carton, thieves not having yet developed a taste for Algerian wine. From the presence of these bottles I deduced that the thief who stole the whisky had none of the excuses of the kleptomaniac, who still steal anything, and none of the excuses of the collector, who at least steals things in order to keep them.

I do not think I ever realised how mean a thing theft can be till I saw those bits of broken glass among the straw. I began to understand the feelings of those early nineteenth-century judges who would sentence a man for a much more innocent theft than this to transportation for life. I knew as I had never known before why thieves have always been looked down on, and why, outside imaginative fiction, thieves have almost consistently been objects of dislike. I suspect these fellows on the railways of not even enjoying the pleasures of stealing. They steal, it seems to me, merely out of malice and because whisky is rare and expensive. These are surely the basest of the descendants of the unrepentant thief. So, at least, it seems to one who has been robbed of his quarterly bottle of whisky.

Y. Y.

THE ART OF BEATRIX POTTER

WHEN Beatrix Potter died a few days before Christmas, there must have been many people (some of her oldest admirers among them) who were surprised to learn that she had been so recently alive. *Peter Rabbit*, *The Tailor of Gloucester*, *Squirrel Nutkin*, were published more than forty years ago, and there was something astonishing in the news that she was the Mrs. William Heelis who had just died at Sawrey in Cumberland, a considerable landowner, successful sheep-breeder, recluse, at the age of seventy-seven.

Yet this surprise, I fancy, would not have offended her. Her extreme reserve, the passionate care with which she concealed herself from the public, the almost obsessional precautions which she took against celebrity, had succeeded so well that the world obligingly assumed that she was dead. Revealed at last, however, by the publicity of death, she emerges as one always hoped she would—short, solid, apple-cheeked, in flower-trimmed hat and shapeless garments, full of character and a particularly delicate understating sort of humour, not without its touch of acerbity. She was, we find, a country body looking not altogether unlike Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle; a woman who had lived all her life in the Lake District and was in love with it; who, out of her feeling for its woods and dales as she remembered them in childhood, its stone-floored farmhouses and cottage gardens profuse with snapdragons and tiger-lilies, and out of her own imaginative observation, amounting to genius, of its farmyard and hedgerow animals, created a tiny world of pure and satisfying fantasy.

For this her talents perfectly equipped her. She was a sensitive draughtsman, and drew animals with insight, spirit and precision. Her animal portraits are, indeed, the fruits of such perception and understanding that they might well illustrate some luxurious set of volumes on natural history—were it not for the fact that her rabbits wear jackets and slippers and that her hedgehog's spines protrude through a mob-cap and apron. Wherever distortion is inevitable (and strictly speaking, hedgehogs do not take in washing, and kittens are not put into clean pinafores, even when company is expected) it is managed with such tact that one's eye, one's sense of fitness is never offended. There is none of the vulgarity, the forced comicality of Walt Disney. Beatrix Potter's humour —and it bubbles up like clear spring water in all her work—is based on her knowledge of character, human and animal, exquisitely observed, symbolically blended, imaginatively expressed.

Her books have always appealed so directly to the youngest minds because, although a mature wit and artistry is at work, the freshness of childhood vision is preserved. Human and childish interests are extended to the animal world, yet without any contradiction of animal character. Samuel Whiskers, the " old man rat," is a thief because he is a gourmet : Tom Kitten's mother is " an anxious parent," always getting the kittens up and trying to make them presentable : Pickles, the bankrupt fox-terrier, readily turns gamekeeper.

Her stories, for all their innocent freshness, have nothing namby-pamby about them ; she even strikes a sinister note where nature requires it, and candidly, though in terms of fantasy, displays the social life of the hedgerow world. To rabbits with young families, to simple-minded farmyard ducks, the fox *is* a sinister character, the badger not altogether to be trusted. The fate which threatens the helpless, the reckless or the simple is to provide a meal for somebody else, and the cynical might claim that this is the only moral she offers to infant minds. However, our feelings are not wantonly exacerbated, and the only casualty we hear of is Peter Rabbit's father, who " had an accident " in Mr. McGregor's garden, and was actually " put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor."

Of the tales based on this predatory theme, *The Roly-Poly Pudding* and *Mr. Tod* are masterpieces ; but when one turns to the gentler, purely domestic tales, one hesitates, for in these Beatrix Potter's genius has produced a microcosm of the loved domestic background of her Cumbrian childhood, and expressed what might almost be called the poetry of housewifery. Here, in pictures full of a detail so poignant as to suggest the nostalgia of the exile, all is in apple-pie order, yet stirring busily with life. The dough is rising before the kitchen fire in an earthenware crock covered with a blanket ; Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle rests her hot iron on a polished horse-shoe ; Mrs. Tittlemouse follows Mr. Jackson round with a dishcloth " to wipe his large wet footmarks off the parlour floor." Her female mice are all exquisitely domesticated, and generally have on a clean apron and a dustpan and brush in their hands. Hunca Munca's touching pride in her domestic arrangements has power to move even the adult reader, and I can still remember the childish emotion, acute almost to tears, with which I first heard how Mrs. Tittlemouse tidied up the mousehole after her adventures.

> Next morning she got up very early and began a spring-cleaning which lasted a fortnight. She swept, and scrubbed, and dusted ; and she rubbed up the furniture with beeswax, and polished her little tin spoons.

And this brings us, perhaps, to the real kernel of Beatrix Potter's art, the reason why she is still, after forty years, without a rival. (E. Nesbit, the only other great artist among children's writers, wrote for the schoolroom age, not for the nursery.) Miss Potter possessed to a very high degree, that faculty which distinguishes the artist and is the basis of genius—creative imagination. She made and peopled a world, and brought it perfectly to life,—which is what Dickens and Trollope did, on a different scale. The woods and hedges, the gardens and wainscots of Beatrix Potter's Cumberland—on which the innocence of early summer morning seems always to rest—are full of little humanised dwellings and concerns, and peopled by characters who are a perfectly realised symbolic blend of animal and human.

One letter has appeared in the *Times* since her death, claiming that Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle was a " real " hedgehog, and that Jeremy Fisher was " real " too, and was once taken in a jam jar by Miss Potter to her publisher to prove some disputed point about his colouring. Well, well ; the anecdote has its charm, but is little to the point. " It does not matter," says Lord David Cecil, " that Dickens' world is not lifelike : it is alive." This was the great strength of his genius ; it was also, on its mouselike scale, Beatrix Potter's.

MARGARET LANE

THE MOVIES

" Guadalcanal Diary," at the Tivoli

" Cry Havoc," at the Empire

There really is a war going on. What else could divide the sexes so, giving us here a hen film and there a cock film, which make up for this austerity by a peculiar lushness of their own ? Hen film at the Empire ; nurses on Manila. " How pretty you all are ! " exclaims Nurse Margaret Sullavan as the volunteers troop in ; of course, they would be. The ugly duckling among them, an early victim of nerves, is ugly only in attitude, not looks, and soon she is a swan like everyone else. There is a bit of bother about two nurses in love with the same lieutenant (off-stage), but even that is straightened out before the tanks rumble in and a Jap voice squeaks to the nurses in the dug-out to come out with their hands up. Odd mixture of austerity and sentiment ! For it isn't at all a bad film ; there are Fay Bainter and Margaret Sullavan in the senior roles, acting admirably ; one gets glimpses of individual character ; the pastings are terrific ; and the only men seen on the screen are trussed in bed or on stretchers.

It is the men's turn at the Tivoli. *Guadalcanal Diary* pays a long-delayed tribute to the U.S. Marines, and some documentary skill has gone to the depiction of their fighting qualities. The landings, the location of invisible Japs, the reconnaissance parties, the final show-down with an enemy immensely superior in numbers, have been worked out with more than usual care. A happy ending—qualified by the heavy losses —is in sight from the beginning, and so there is " wisecracking to the crack of snipers," and during the lulls some very smooth singing of glees. Odd mixture again ! Yet, again, it's not so bad ; in fact, on the whole good. Given the popular recipe, all the possible entertainment is extracted from the theme, and in some sort of way a dignity preserved. Talented actors, William Bendix, Lloyd Nolan, Preston Foster. A cut above *Wake Island*, though not in the class of *Bataan*.

There isn't even the swish of a skirt in *Guadalcanal Diary*. The moral seems to be that in a film you can have men without women but not, in the last resort, women without men.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

" Winkles and Champagne," at Unity Theatre

This is Unity's most ambitious production. The authors, Mr. Newman and Mr. Rowbotham, have taken items that range from Fielding's burletta *The Virgin Unmasked* to the choruses of the Nineties, and have linked them together with some clever original writing to present the story of the music-halls. The result is first-class entertainment. This show is neither a tedious cavalcade of imitations nor a deluge of nostalgia. The continuity is not always too clear, and it would be possible to use the compère more effectively for this purpose. But the swift succession of burlesque, clowning and pompous extravaganza more than make up in fun for what is at present lacking in polish. Unity for once have relaxed their rule of anonymity for the cast. Doris Levenson, as a " one-and-only " queen of the halls, and David Kossof, as chairman *à la* Groucho Marx, can therefore be singled out from an unusually good cast. No small part of the success of this ingenious revue is due to the decor by Mr. Bernard Sarron, which makes the most of Unity's small stage.

" While the Sun Shines," at the Globe Theatre

In the first act two young men share a bed, in the third act three. This variation on the usual bedroom farce is a result of the shortage of beds in London and of the multiplicity of Allied soldiers. Otherwise Mr. Rattigan has been faithful to convention. The characters are stock ; the penniless duke, the butler with a withering glance, even the trollop with a heart of gold. It is strange to find so sophisticated a writer labouring generally accepted platitudes about the nobility, explaining repeatedly that earls are really quite like other people—strange and a little embarrassing. But the most surprising feature of the play is the Fighting French officer, more odious than comic, and painted, it seems, with a queer vindictiveness. If so clever a writer as Mr. Rattigan felt forced to give us a horrid Frenchman, he might at least have made him recognisably French. This is a phantom from an English farce of the Eighties : he ought to have a beard and a tapering topper. The American, on the other hand, is drawn sympathetically and with an eye on the facts. He is the making of the play, and Mr. Hugh McDermott fills the part most engagingly. The rest of the cast struggle bravely with their shop-soiled roles : in particular that excellent actor, Mr. Ronald Squire, imitates his inimitable self very plausibly. The producer, Mr. Anthony Asquith, reveals his deftness in a number of touches, e.g. in the brilliant handling of a telephone. The dialogue is delightfully neat and there are a lot of laughs. If this farce were by the author of *Quiet Week-end* we should applaud a striking progress. But we cannot forget that, in *French Without Tears*, he took the trouble to invent new characters and situations.

WAR LETTERS

THE letters are shockingly real,
Like the personal belongings
Of someone recently dead.

The letters are permanent,
And written with our hands,
Which crease into their lines

And breathe, but are not so
Living as these letters.
Our hands are seas apart ;

A pair might cease to live
While the indestructible letter,
Turned lies, flew to the other.

The letters express a love
We cannot realise :
Like a poignant glove

Surviving a well-known hand,
They can outlast our bodies
And our love transcend.

ROY FULLER

Correspondence

CAPTIVES AND EXILES

SIR,—Your article on " Captives and Exiles " was a timely revelation of European realities to-day. There has been, in recent years, much loose talk about reversing Hitler's " transfer " methods after the war. By " humanising " the same process some people hoped finally to achieve clear-cut ethnographical frontiers all over Europe. But there is no " human " way to do it. The size of the problem is illustrated by the reluctant behaviour of the democratic countries when opening their doors to Hitler's hunted victims. I, myself, had some share in the search for new homes for the refugees from Sudetenland after " Munich." Tens of thousands active anti-Fascists were in deadly danger. In addition, some 60,000 Jews in the occupied regions had to face extermination. The problem was raised urgently in the House of Commons, and the then Prime Minister, Chamberlain, answered :—

> " At the beginning of October, it was represented to the Government that there were in Czechoslovakia a certain number of individuals (*sic*) who were in danger if they remained where they were, and accordingly we authorised the temporary admission to this country of those individuals up

to the number of 350, on the undertaking given to us, that means should be found to maintain these individuals, if necessary, during their stay here.

In reply to Miss Rathbone's question: "Why only 350?" the Prime Minister said that members of the families of the lucky 350 would be admitted separately . . . I remember the months of hard bargaining for every additional hundred visas which followed. France took, after long hesitation, five dozen Sudeten-refugees, Finland an equal number, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway accepted between one and two hundred each. Little Luxembourg offered shelter for 15 homeless persons. In most cases, the reception countries insisted on a further overseas emigration of the guests . . . Here, a new problem arose. The Canadians wanted agricultural settlers with money, the New Zealanders mostly younger building workers, the Australians preferred industrial specialists, and Palestine capitalists with £2,000 per family. All I can say is that I am satisfied for the rest of my life with the trouble created by this humanitarian "transfer" of about 3,000 persons.

Such experience should not be forgotten by people who freely suggest a "humanly" organised mass-emigration after the war. With Hitler and Himmler methods one could, of course, move millions. But as soon as the problem is related to the state of an ordered society, to Labour markets and immigration laws, keenness to transfer millions may be suddenly confronted with the immense difficulties of resettling some hundreds of families in a decent way. But for such real difficulties—work, housing, money—I believe millions of hunted Jews or thousands of brave fighters for Republican Spain could have been rescued.

Before the end of the war, if the air-warfare continues on the present scale, there will also be roughly ten million homeless people in Germany itself. Up to two million civilian evacuees from Germany proper will lose their temporary shelters in Austria, the "Protectorate" and the Sudetenland—but they will have nowhere to go back to! Blessings on any occupation authority which can manage the demobilisation of the huge army of homeless Europeans without epidemics, starvation and breakdown of transport. But who could prepare for an ordered or prosperous Europe with a new stream of mass migration, forced additionally on millions of uprooted workers, technicians, and peasants?

As for the political side of the transfer plans, it may suffice to say this: vertical retribution against the Fascists and quislings in every nation involves only the "transfer" of the guilty into prisons. But a horizontal retribution of peoples against peoples or against minority populations as a whole will have nothing to do with peace anyhow.

16, Laurel Gardens, N.W.7. WENZEL JAKSCH

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to criticise your remarks under this heading in so far as they refer to the Sudeten Germans?

I cannot, of course, deny that their expulsion would cause great hardship to themselves and to the Germans of the Reich, but a proposal of this kind should never be discussed, let alone rejected, without a careful weighing of the alternative or alternatives which such rejection would imply. Since you have failed to do so, let me examine the only two alternatives which seem to present themselves.

The first alternative would be the maintenance of the Munich frontiers with all they imply, and it need hardly be said that the Czechs have not fought National Socialism for five or six years so that at the moment of their liberation they should voluntarily accept the status which was forced upon them at Munich.

The second alternative would be a return to the pre-1938 status and the restoration of full citizenship to the Sudeten Germans. I for one have but little doubt that they would never accept the corresponding obligation of loyalty to the Republic and that they would remain a disruptive element.

Let me say frankly that the suffering which the expulsion of the Sudeten German Fascists would imply leaves me quite cold. If it has often been suggested that Fascism was forced upon the German masses, there remain two districts of which this certainly cannot be said—the Saar and the Sudeten country. In both these countries, the Germans embraced National Socialism freely and with an overwhelming majority. If at the end of the war they are being sent "Heim ins Reich" they will only have their passionate will fulfilled.

Lest I be accused of preaching racialism I wish to say most emphatically that those Sudeten Germans who remained loyal to the democratic conception of society should remain as free and equal, nay, honoured, citizens of the new Czechoslovak Republic. That these, however, represent a minority, was shown by the 1938 municipal elections.

54 Glendale Ave., Edgware. KAREL VIVARY

"REFUGEES" IN UNIFORM

SIR,—In November, 1943, the Alien Pioneer Corps looked back on its fourth anniversary. Those who were among the first to join this Pioneer Corps remember with what sensation the public welcomed the first German and Austrian refugees in British uniform. Indeed, we have so many "moral" allies, yet even after four years' service, partly with the B.E.F. in France, we are still "Enemy Aliens," and so retain the same position as when we joined up at the middle of November, 1939; our status is still much the same as that of a German prisoner of war.

"You have no Government nor any recognised representative of your country in Britain, so you cannot be on the same level as the French, Poles and Dutch," declared a senior official to me when I asked him why we were still "Enemy Aliens." Can such argument really be regarded as final? Don't we wear the same uniform as the British soldier? If we disobey an order we are tried by King's Rules and Regulations, and the punishment is the same as for any Czech, Pole or Frenchman who joined the British Army instead of his own forces.

Why do the British Government not follow the Americans, who even went so far as to declare openly that 600,000 Italians are friendly "aliens" before Italy surrendered? Why do the British Government still refuse to give those refugees British citizenship who are willing to die for our common cause?

If they expect the same services and duties, then they should give to all fighters the same privileges. A few of my friends went to America from the Kitchener Camp (where the first alien company was formed). Now I meet them again as American soldiers. They have American citizenship after being in the Army less than 12 months before their hopes were fulfilled. And here we are after four years of waiting—we still wait. Our idea that our British friends would at least recognise our endless struggle against Nazism inside and outside Germany has failed. Even moral assistance has been unsuccessful.

Our hate against Nazi Germany has so far had no effect at all. All our disappointments have served to keep open the scars and wounds from Dachau and Buchenwald.

"JOSEF GETA"
(Pen-name of an alien Pioneer)

CIVIL AVIATION

SIR,—It is very probable, as Mr. Mikardo suggests, that complete internationalisation of the whole world's air transport system is politically impracticable in the near future. If, however, we are to have something less than this, there are two obvious alternatives:—

(*a*) Complete internationalisation over a much smaller area—say, a continent.

(*b*) Partial internationalisation over the whole world, leaving the shorter routes to be dealt with by national or private companies.

Most workers in this field have advocated the former

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procedure; it is not quite clear to me why they should be classed as woolly idealists because Mr. Mikardo has chosen to support the latter alternative. Philip Noel-Baker, W. Arnold-Forster and Jonathan Griffin in 1934 were advocating an international system, preferably for the world, or, failing that, at least for Europe; and it would appear that a European Air Corporation having the sole right to fly aeroplanes within the Continent and the Mediterranean basin might be quite a practicable post-war plan if the support of the British Government could be obtained. If we must have sovereign States in post-war Europe, at least it should be possible to ensure that they do not have the right to veto the passage of air-liners over their territory; but such rights would hardly be surrendered to permit free passage of nationally-owned and subsidised planes from a neighbouring State. If the planes belonged to a properly-constituted international authority the right would be granted much more readily.

In my previous letter I drew attention to some of the reasons for thinking Mr. Mikardo's world-wide partial internationalisation was likely to prove impracticable. In his reply he mentions yet another—the very intractable attitude we have to fear from the U.S.A. The Soviet Union might well have objections as well; but neither consideration need prevent us from developing the system in the space between, where it is most badly needed and where, moreover, the political conditions are fluid.

At Mr. Mikardo's suggestion, I have re-read his article but my conviction has only been strengthened that his pessimistic view of the extent of air travel in the future is due to his having concentrated his attention on long-distance travel. Long "hops" mean more fuel must be carried, and less goods or passengers; and if, in addition, the comparison is made with sea, rather than land travel the comparison is bound to be very unfavourable to air. Had he considered London-Paris rather than San Francisco-Brisbane, his cost-ratios would have been very much lower; but, unfortunately, he seems determined to leave the lucrative routes to private enterprise so that his World Authority may operate the necessarily more uneconomic trunk routes of 1,500–3,500 mile stages.

I cannot claim to understand fully Mr. Mikardo's final suggestion that "the many progressives" need protection from "the handful of Progressives." Unless he fears well-intentioned criticism, it is difficult to see what he has to be afraid of.

LESLIE MINCHIN,
Hon Sec.

The Progressive League (F.P.S.I.)
20, Buckingham Street, W.C.2.

SUPPLY OF TEACHERS

SIR,—Your correspondent C. G. Vernon writes a salutary letter. In his "sounder plan," however, I fear he is over-optimistic. His first point, the drastic reduction of all classes to a maximum of 30, and his third, the raising of the school-leaving age to 15, will be mutually destructive for years to come. The rock on which this double plan will split is the supply of teachers. I have no space to discuss the matter in detail, but does anyone believe that the number of teachers necessary for both these reforms will be forthcoming in the next five years? In that period we shall be able to have smaller classes *or* the raising of the age, but not both.

Let all of us interested in educational progress emphasise Mr. Vernon's earlier point, that the most serious evil is the size of classes. Let us ask that this problem shall be faced first and the *quality* of education improved. Quantity may follow. Let education take the place of mass-instruction; let the age be raised as soon as possible afterwards. We shall still have the "bored boys and girls longing for release" unless we approach more nearly the tutorial method and provide the conditions under which guidance for self-discovery can be given. This cannot be done by factory methods in education.

The first reform in our educational practice should be the reduction in the size of classes. It is basic; it is essential; it should precede where it cannot accompany the more high-sounding projects; its advocacy is the first duty of every educationist.

E. H. MITCHELL

5 Springfield Gardens,
Upminster, Essex.

ATROCITIES

SIR,—My husband in his letters from Italy has said: "The Germans, so the people tell us, are stealing food and clothing as they withdraw and often taking the more attractive women with them. The other day we saw a young fellow, half crazy and carrying a young baby which should still be at the breast. The Germans had carried off his young bride with them. A day or two ago, we found the stinking corpses of ten civilians machine-gunned against a wall and the body of a young woman shot through the throat. The good opinion of the German soldier that I gained in the desert has been completely obliterated by their filthy conduct in Italy." On the question of the killing and maiming of young children, he wrote that this was always blamed on the Germans, but that he was more inclined to think that such infanticide was not deliberate, "although the Italians would have us believe otherwise."

As regards the stories of rape and horror, my husband has said that these are quite probably true, and that many of our men had stories to tell of how they had met others who have seen examples, but "I have never met anyone who has seen such things for themselves or have any tangible proofs."

ESME SKILTON

"Green Fields," Waggon Woods,
Hadley Woods.

GERMANS

SIR,—The following quotation should be of particular interest to those who continue to believe in the obsolete doctrine of nations possessing unchanging inate psychological characteristics. It is taken from "England, Scotland and Ireland," a travel book by the German J. G. Kohl, published in 1844. Kohl quotes the opinion of a fellow German, William Guthrie, given in 1776:—

"The Germans are by nature an honest, hospitable people, passionately fond of liberty, and very little versed in dissimulation and artifice. The Germans are brave, and when led by able generals, particularly by ITALIANS, have often performed great achievements."

E. R. WARD

61 Barclay Street,
Leicester.

"CRIME AND PSYCHOLOGY"

SIR,—Mr. C. H. Rolph wrote for your issue of December 18th a review of my "Crime and Psychology," for which I am deeply grateful. It is the kindest that I have read. But may I put right one minor error? "But what a struggle it is. People in jobs are often unable to attend the clinics or the doctors' surgeries." The last four words are inaccurate. Indeed, in the book, on p. 61, I wrote: "It was never a difficulty that our delinquents had not time or energy to make the necessary visits" to local doctors. This correction may seem niggling, but the point is important. Where courts are sufficiently fortunate to have suitable and willing doctors in or near their areas, most difficulties that are found when delinquents go to clinics disappear. Delinquents and others are used to doctors' surgeries, so when they go to one, even at the request of a court, they have no unreasonable fear. Unfortunately, comparatively few courts have these facilities, though more courts could have them if they tried.

CLAUD MULLINS

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

A NEW edition of *The Dunciad* gives a stir to mud and fog. Out of the shadows, "laborious, heavy, busy, bold, and blind," Dullness rises again to restore her empire; the laureate is chosen; the procession wends its way from Smithfield to the river; Oldmixon, Blackmore, Concanen and the rest with obscene trumpetings dive into the ooze; triumphal games are followed by a sleep in which vision hovers over huge conquests in space and time; every art, every science is besmirched; and, with the fall of the curtain, "Universal Darkness covers all." It is a conclusion that can be enjoyed with more equanimity to-day than would have been possible, say, three years ago.

Then, the latest hero of *The Dunciad*—a frantic successor to poor Theobald and Colley Cibber—saluting himself in Boulogne and leaning forward to screw an invasion eye to the telescope, seemed chosen to be the first of a new line.

> Nor *public* Flame, nor *private*, dares to shine;
> Nor *human* Spark is left, nor Glimpse *divine!*
> Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
> Light dies before thy uncreating word.

Pope's sonorous ending, tragic in its threat, came near to being the epitaph of generations; and for anyone sitting down to read the poem at that moment (there can't have been many such readers, except perhaps among the very old) *The Dunciad* must have enjoyed undreamt-of triumphs. Every satirist veils a tragedian and a prophet of doom. He sets up his puppets—wretched pygmies, we exclaim; until in the light of events their shadows suddenly enlarge and overwhelm. Pope's masterpiece is backed by innumerable shadows, giant fears, which disquiet at the best of times; and now that our apprehensions have dwindled, we can examine curiously an art which is at the same time grotesque and tragic, and hatches a roc from a hen's egg. No other satire shocks by being both so petty and so universal. Swift, exiled in Dublin, complained at the time that no one outside twenty miles of London could hope to get the points of *The Dunciad*, and this has obstructed some readers and given a zest to others ever since. The decline in classical education is likely further to widen that division; we can foresee the time when *The Dunciad* will be read for its verbal magic, a closed book like Joyce's *Ulysses* or certain poems of Mallarmé:

> One casts his eyes
> Up to a *Star*, and like Endymion dies:
> A *Feather* shooting from another's head,
> Extracts his brain, and Principle is fled. . . .
>
> Knight lifts the head, for what are crowds undone
> To three essential Partridges in one? . . .

In each case the explanation happens to be quite simple. The calamities mentioned in the first quotation are both attributable to the Order of the Garter; a star, and cap feathers, being part of the insignia worn. And Pope's note on the partridges is almost as fascinating as the acrostic-like couplet it elucidates:

> *Three essential Partriges in one.* i.e., two dissolved into Quintessence to make sauce for the third. The honour of this invention belongs to France, yet has been excell'd by our native luxury, an hundred squab Turkeys being not infrequently deposited in one Pye in the Bishopric of Durham: to which our author alludes in ver. 593 of this work.

This information has already been dropped from the notes to most editions: the Globe edition, for example, a favourite with schools. Already one is tempted lazily to skip the meaning of such lines and to be satisfied with an elusive elegance contrasting oddly with the directness of other passages. Or it is, perhaps, rather an increased sensibility, which shows his growing ascendancy as a poet, and which makes it possible for us to enjoy Pope, at moments, cryptically. Until recently it would have been paradoxical to speak of the beauties of *The Dunciad*, to cite these lines:

> Lo! where Maeotis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows.

Pope himself, was, fully conscious of such splendours, and described the couplet, according to Johnson, as the one of his that "most gratified his ear": to which Johnson adds "But the reason of this preference I cannot discover." It is a pity that Mr. James Sutherland, whose edition does so much to restore *The Dunciad* in all its particulars, should have omitted the second and more revealing half of this anecdote.

But what an unearthing it is! Besides the two versions of *The Dunciad*—the three books of 1728 and the final revision and addition of a fourth book in 1742—there are introductions, prefaces, prolegomena, appendices, indices, notes upon notes upon notes; in all nearly five hundred pages; yet even these are hardly enough to piece together the situation in every detail. Pope had been working for six years or more to create the situation in which the poem should appear. It must seem that genius had been provoked beyond bearing, that grudges involved moral principles, that imbecility and corruption should be denounced before it was too late: in short, that the position was dangerous. The minor characters had been chosen already (that couplet to dispose of Lady Mary), the classical examples had been studied, the fun well beaten up, the names dropped in like pebbles—but who, to justify all this hubble-bubble, was to be hero? Looking round, he could find no one better for the part than Theobald; a nonenity, but he happened to have enraged Pope by producing a better edition of Shakespeare than Pope's. So first Theobald was crowned, and then Colley Cibber, because the satire had to be brought home. There was just enough fact to start imagination, to provide the weak spots for attack:

> Swearing and supperless the Hero sate,
> Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and damn'd his Fate.
> Then gnaw'd his pen, then dashed it to the ground,
> Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
> Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
> Yet wrote and flounder'd on, in mere despair.
> Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
> Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;
> Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
> That slip'd thro' Cracks and Zig-zags of the Head;
> All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
> Fruits of dull Heat, and Sooterkins of Wit.

Thus, the monster of Pope's creation; made more monstrous perhaps in proportion to the toughness of hide of Cibber, who genially boasted that his own *Letter* kept Pope "as uneasy as a Rat in a hot Kettle for a Twelve-month." However, apart from this, the victims had been well chosen. Pope's taste was, in its way, impeccable; though we may still respect Quarles, still enjoy *Robinson Crusoe*, and even take pleasure in reading Cibber's *Apology for His Life*, without a twinge for the sly little monarch of Twickenham.

Mr. Sutherland gives a full account in his introduction of the preparatory action to *The Dunciad*, and the Notes Variorum describe the running fight that followed. It may seem ungenerous to ask for more, but I wish Mr. Sutherland had been able to include *The Art of Sinking in Poetry*, the prose counterpart of *The Dunciad* and a brilliant *sottisier* of the verse-writers of the time. More than anything else written by Pope it helped to raise the necessary enemy.

The two versions of 1728 and 1742 are printed in that order and not, as usually, the other way round. This has one serious disadvantage: that most of the notes appear under the early text and the reader is constantly referred back when he comes to the final poem. It ensures, however, our reading the poem in its successive stages, and that, despite repetition, is an experience. One sees, in detail, how an art already meticulous can be improved on.

> Now May'rs and Shrieves in pleasing slumbers lay,
> Yet eat in dreams the custard of the day;
> While pensive Poets painful vigils keep,
> Sleepless themselves to give their readers sleep.

In a later correction this has become:

> Now May'rs and Shrieves all hush'd and satiate lay. . . .

Pope never altered a couplet for the worse, except where the larger changes in the poem demanded it; Cibber's accession, for example, meant the loss of several nice touches, though even here Pope plumped usually for posterity and left in a good deal of inapplicable detail, making the careless gamester and actor a pedant like Theobald.

The chief difference between the two versions—Pope's "excuse" for a *New Dunciad* and a new outcry—lay in the addition of a fourth book, which immensely widens the scope of the poem and rounds off the satire. Its relation to *The Dunciad* as a whole is that of the Second Part to Goethe's *Faust*. Not that Pope's philosophy as such, though sensible enough, is particularly valuable; but the change of scene (the polite world instead of Grub Street) and even more the change of tone give a perspective to the murky antics that have gone before. At the Italian opera:

> When lo! a Harlot form soft sliding by,
> With mincing step, small voice, and languid eye:
> Foreign her air, her robe's discordant pride
> In patch-work fluttering, and het head aside
> By singing Peers upheld on either hand,
> She tripp'd and laugh'd, too pretty much to stand;
> Cast on the prostrate Nine a scornful look,
> Then thus in quaint Recitativo spoke.
> "O *Cara! Cara!* silence all that train:
> Joy to great Chaos! let Division reign:
> Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,
> Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense. . ."

The tone and movement of this verse—which is fairly typical of Book IV—transports us leagues away from Smithfield where our journey began, so that looking back we recall as from a subterranean visit the croaking mobs, the half-light, the thud of monosyllables—

> "A pig of lead to him who dives the best;
> A peck of coals a-piece shall glad the rest."

The justification of Book IV, to which the lack of action has been objected, is in fact almost musical: this was exactly the tempo needed for such a last movement. In the battle fought for so long here is a hint of the closing years in a tortured but not unhappy life.

The Dunciad remains a masterpiece to which one returns again and again: as vital a satire of the age of patrons as is *Bouvard et Pécuchet* of nineteenth-century democracy. And, as with Flaubert, one turns to the correspondence of the lonely geniuses (Pope and Swift) who at long intervals can evolve such satire, admiring their strength but depressed by the bitterness that accompanies it. Their hatred is too *voulu*, too autocratic, like illness embraced for its own sake. Swift, the nearer of the two in temper to Flaubert, was in a sense the real author of *The Dunciad;* it was *his* idea, and *his* pessimism and withdrawal underlie the brilliant accomplishment of Pope. Reading the letters that passed between them, so many on Pope's side, so few and abrupt on the other, we feel our attention wandering more and more towards Swift. He was one root of the flower—orchid or stinkwort—represented by *The Dunciad*. The other extended a fibrous growth throughout the age in which Pope lived; and up it comes, roots, earth and all, to the reader who will grub his way with Mr. Sutherland's edition. It is a splendid disinterment, such as this poem deserves in every age, and the only unkind word that can be said against Mr. Sutherland as an editor is that he pays little or no tribute to his predecessors, Elwin and Courthope. The Victorians may have missed a great deal in Pope, may have disapproved of what they admired, but they also produced the only adequate edition of his works.

G. W. STONIER

**The Dunciad.* Edited by James Sutherland. Twickenham Edition of Pope. *Methuen.* 30*s.*

THOUGH MEN BE SO STRONG

Fourscore Years : An Autobiography. By G. G. COULTON. *Cambridge University Press.* 21*s.*

This is not the autobiography of an intellectual, a don, a humanist, a connoisseur of life or a cultivated man of public affairs; it is the record of a scholar's life. Dr. Coulton, possibly the greatest living historian of medieval religious life, has now at the age of eighty-five written his own history. The vigour of his style is hardly impaired by his years. Indeed the first impression we receive is of tremendous strength : strength of body, of mind and character, strength of purpose. For Coulton belongs to the old school of historians. He stands with the Victorian giants, men like Gairdner, Tout and Round, men of enormous industry and erudition who wrote history which succeeding generations have emended or embellished but which still remains the trunk from which modern research springs. His book is most fascinating and discursive, and re-creates a world, now all too distant, in distinct and palpable form. Like Maitland's *Life of Leslie Stephen* it contains the peculiar essence of Cambridge and the qualities which that university especially cherishes. Those at Cambridge will naturally read this book; those at Oxford should.

The story begins with an account of the borough of King's Lynn where his childhood was spent, the horrors of the Lycée at St. Omer, which he attended as a small boy, and his public school, Felsted. Felsted in the early seventies appears to have been a carefree place, far pleasanter than Oman's Winchester. Bird's-nesting was conducted on all-in principles and one collector would, as a matter of course, saw the branch half through along which his adversary must climb, in the vain hope of deterring him. The early days of the Cadet Corps were equally perilous. As the headmaster gave the word " fire " at the range, his top hat left his head and settled in a hedge behind; one cadet had forgotten to extract his ramrod. The French master might have been the original of all comic French ushers of Victorian school fiction; and his successors either could not speak English or disappeared in unmentionable circumstances — one of them arriving on a Saturday was discovered dead drunk on Sunday morning in a pigsty behind the Chapel. Indeed many of Coulton's years were spent in public schools, for after leaving St. Catherine's with an *aegrotat* degree, teaching appeared to be the profession at which he could best make a living: he taught at Llandovery, Sherborne, Sedbergh, Dulwich. For those who preserve a taste for descriptions of Victorian schools, of austere Jehovah-like headmasters, of old curriculums, of their staffs often containing men of scholarship and eccentricity, these pages are highly entertaining. Intermingled are descriptions of journeys abroad, of sunsets, scenes, of vivid memories of dreams and an enchanting description of becoming engaged to his wife during a Lunn tour in Switzerland.

All this time he was reading, annotating, indexing. His teaching, whether in schools or under one of his closest friends, an Army crammer, was merely a means of providing bread and cheese, money for books and trips to the British Museum and abroad. Not until St. John's nobly and wisely offered him a fellowship after the last war did he really make more money than covered the bare necessities. The strength of his body and character were matched by his strength of purpose: all was subordinated to the pursuit of truth.

Scholars are by nature seekers after truth; but many do not believe it can be found; some so narrow the field of their enquiry as to exclude all broad debatable issues; some are swayed or overcome by worldly ambition, their fleshly appetites, neuroses, instability or torpor. The relentless, uncompromising, high-minded search for truth is rare; and those who possess it are sometimes parched in mind and heart. Too often it strangles the sense of proportion and makes the explorer ridiculous, like Freeman. It breeds arrogance which hardens into bigotry, and the flowers of ancient friendships are withered by candour and controversy. Above all it may narrow the appreciation of life. To none of these has Coulton succumbed. His humour is of a high order and, in describing one of the bees in his bonnet, his passionate advocacy of conscription (modelled on the Swiss system in force in 1900), he combines the ability to realise that he may appear comical with the belief that he was right and what he said was worth while saying. An inveterate pamphleteer, he believes that history would be better for more, not less, controversy and that a court of common pleas should be established where adversaries could argue their case before a jury of " professional or business men or artisans who have time for solid reading in the evenings." He proclaims his readiness at any time to publish at his expense all that an adversary can say against his own inferences and assertions. He believes men are converted by argument though he does not forget a postcard he received from H. W. Fowler: " Most convincing—by which I don't mean that it will ever convince anyone of anything." In some ways his mind is curiously simple; and in consequence he seems always to believe that his opponent is wrong always because his facts are wrong. He fails to realise that two men could be given the same set of facts and yet arrive at different conclusions, owing to the relative value of and the inferences drawn from those facts. But one must be careful: Dr. Coulton always knows far more facts than anyone else. . . .

One should remember also that his controversies were conducted against a powerful and noisy claque, the Roman Catholic apologists. Chief among them was Cardinal Gasquet, and to him Dr. Coulton allots a chapter entitled "An Extreme Case." With possibly unconscious humour he denies he felt any prejudice against the man: " On the contrary, I studied his face with the greatest interest at the International Historical Congress wondering what was going on within." Coulton treated him with consideration; but when he was convinced that he had reached a state of impenitence "where misstatement must be christened *falsehood* and a still further stage of hardened deliberation where the only fitting word is *lie*," he attacked him unsparingly. These are the genuine accents of the zealot for truth; and though, during his lifetime, Gasquet was lauded as a great historian, to-day he lies exposed as a shallow, sectarian propagandist.

It was this ardour for truth and his inability to depart a jot from what he judged right and honourable which led Coulton to quit parish work soon after he was ordained, as he could not continue to believe articles which he felt he must believe if he were to continue in the priesthood. Not that he became an agnostic; his present beliefs correspond perhaps with those of Professor MacNeile Dixon's, and the fateful step caused him no suffering. For all one's strength the psalmist will have it that fourscore years bring labour and sorrow. Yet Coulton's is the story of a happy life. It is the full confirmation of what Housman wrote in 1892: " Other desires perish in their gratification, but the desire of knowledge never; the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing. . . . So long as the mind of man is what it is it will con-

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tinue to exult in advancing throughout the infinite field of the universe; and the tree of knowledge will remain for ever, as it was in the beginning, a tree to be desired to make one wise." In his approach to truth, in his lack of vanity, he reminds one of T. H. Huxley; but odd, of course . . . . yes *very* odd to those accustomed to the civilities and sensibilities of a polished life. And though he has been happy, there have been cruel passages. His parents were long dead before he won recognition; his writing he calculates brought him in a steady average per hour equal to a compositor's wage for setting up the type; few historians now seem interested in his subject. Such is the life of a scholar: God knows if we should laugh or weep.

NOEL ANNAN

ITALY, PAST AND FUTURE

What to do with Italy. By GAETANO SALVEMINI and GEORGE LA PIANA. *Gollancz.* 6s.

During this war we have had two small books about quite modern Italy, written by people who had seen through the fascination of Fascist propaganda. One was a Penguin published two years ago, called *The Remaking of Italy*, by five English and Italian students of Fascism and fairly packed with information and knowledge. The other is Cassius's recent *Trial of Mussolini* in which everything laudatory and cheerful and ignorant that was said about Mussolini's regime these last twenty years by our most eminent statesmen and publicists is ruthlessly revealed in one of the most uncomfortable witness boxes any court has ever known.

It is probable that readers of this third little book about modern Italy will already be familiar with the other two, and if they are, they will find themselves walking, as it were, in a familiar landscape, exploring new vantage points, but conscious, this time, that they are in the company of a very angry, often bitter and sardonic old gentleman who knows a lot about the landscape. Professor Salvemini is passionate in his description; he talks often at white heat. Also he explains why the landscape is like this, and since it is Italian landscape, it is full of surprises and excitements unknown to English political life. But he is not a gardener. A gardener would not continually blame the neighbours (guilty though they are of light-headed admiration for the Fascist landscape) when the woods are destroyed by fire and the seeds die and the houses collapse.

There is much of the *Trial of Mussolini* in the first part of this book, often indeed longer quotations from American Cardinals, English Statesmen, and journalists from everywhere, than Cassius used, and there is a marshalling of facts and figures to show how wrong and superficial those judgments were. But it would need a deeper study of our times that can be made in these short pages, to explain why and how the myth of Mussolini as the bulkwark against Bolshevism flourished in the third and fourth decades of this century.

Failing that, the *Trial of Mussolini* handles the problem far more succinctly and convincingly. That is one problem. Another is the way which Italians themselves handled their political life and how they are handicapped in their great struggle towards unity and freedom which is not ended yet.

Professor Salvemini will have no blame attached to the Italians. On the contrary, he says they accomplished wonders between the Risorgimento and 1922. That is partly true, though the wonders were miracles of survival and genial compromise, rather than the laying of strong foundation stones.

Sooner or later we must come to the question of morals and economics. Here both authors fairly plunge into the whole question of religious teaching, relations with the Vatican, and the ever-present evil of Italy's economic poverty coupled with her immensely active, genial and thwarted spirit of enterprise and hard work. Anyone who would like to dismiss Italy as an unimportant factor in Europe after this devastating war on her soil, will take warning here.

The later sections dealing with the Lateran Treaty and Italy's special relations with the Vatican are vigorous and will help those who want to peer into the future way of thinking of a liberated Italy. Then there is a lucid review of the kind of territorial questions that must arise in a coming Peace Settlement with Italy, and that is written with the right kind of patriotism.

The villains of the whole Italian scene in this book are the Anglo-Americans, the House of Savoy and the Vatican. If you can accept them as such, the book is convincing. Even if you are not the kind of person who is always wanting a scapegoat, the book is full of earnest and vigorous pleading and has some very useful plans for the future. The lesson of the past, as Salvemini and La Piana teach it, shows that a nation may become the victim of the blindness of other nations. This, however, should have led the authors to emphasise much more then they actually do that national problems will, in the future, prove to be but fragments of a wider European and ultimately of a world settlement.

SYLVIA SPRIGGE

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The Small Back Room. By NIGEL BALCHIN. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Pemberton. By DAVID FOOTMAN. *Cresset Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Water on the Steps. By PETER DE POLNAY. *Secker and Warburg.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

I began my holiday reading with Mr. Pearsall Smith's exquisite article on fine writing, and then reread Mr. Connolly's analysis of contemporary English prose in *Enemies of Promise*. The appetite awakened by these *hors d'œuvres* proved far too voracious, and I over-read badly. The main courses (in descending order of enjoyment) were Gibbon, Pater, Chesterfield, Landor, Meredith, Johnson and Sir Thomas Browne. All are fine writers in the sense that all were aware, and most of them explicitly, of fine writing as their aims. Alas that my feelings in the night train to London should have been of complacency rather than real improvement, of superfluity rather than satiety. To read *Religio Medici* for the first time in one morning is the sign of a bad reader, and, indeed, from the last three writers on the list I received all too little unforced enjoyment. Yet how intense was the pleasure from a slow digestion of Gibbon's second volume and of Chesterfield's first.

There is, or so it seems to me in the irritable and dogmatic mood of a too recent New Year, only one respectable alternative to fine writing. This is the racy vigour of a healthy colloquial language, the vigour of Defoe, of Smollett and of Hemingway at his rare best. Between this style and the studied elegance of Pater there need be no argument or antipathy. But under the thin mist of respectable writing the gigantic annual output of printed matter has fantastically increased. And, as Mr. Connolly vividly shows, the effect has been felt even among creative writers; indeed, it has even had its critical advocates. But the language of journalism, of pamphlets, of advertisements, of Government circulars, and infantry training manuals has *no* colloquial merit.

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—*Old Proverb*

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OF LIVERPOOL

CHANGE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE TIMES

Somewhat *recherché* oral traditions may still exist in the English town and country, but these can have nothing in common with the drab, castrated language of everyday print.

In this context the first two books under review are of unusual interest. Both are intelligent and absorbing works; both are written in the same fanatically undistinguished style.

> Looking at it in cold blood it seemed an even bet that Pemberton had wasted his money and that there would not be a general strike; and that even if there was it would go off at half-cock. The next ten days or a fortnight were pretty intolerable. Everybody was on the jump. I only saw the Old Man once or twice, but I thought he looked very grey and old and worried. But the Germans meant business and so did Pemberton, and they were making headway. This was a grand red-herring because it woke up Gladwin's boys. They recognised the opening notes of one of the eternal rows with the army and started to rally round.

Here I have borrowed a device from *Enemies of Promise.* The first sentence is Footman; the next two are Balchin; the third is Footman, and the two last sentences are Balchin again. The style is literally indistinguishable throughout both books, and in each it has clearly been quite deliberately adopted. It is the style of the business world, of the public school fringe, of the provincial bar and the dubious major. Both books are written in the first person, a fact which goes a long way to justify the selection of any style considered appropriate to the narrator. In fact, I am by no means convinced that the books should or could have been written otherwise. There is a peculiar, blunt, rather avid effectiveness about it, and it has the merit of moving at a terrific pace. But it is immensely limiting. The heroes of these books are almost interchangeable, and any protagonist from one of them would be equally at home in the other. Perhaps of greater significance, the hero of *The Small Back Room* differs very little from Sarrat, Balchin's earlier novel, *Darkness Falls from the Air.* And here again the protagonists, the style and the general atmosphere are indistinguishable.

One of the richest, but rarest, qualities in a novelist is the ability to alter his style according to altering situations and different characters. In a great writer capable of such varying styles the flat exhausted slang favoured by Footman and Balchin might find a small effective place. But if it proves to be the only style available to a given novelist, used indiscriminately for every character and every circumstance, then an appalling limitation is imposed. And even among the greatest novelists only a small minority has achieved more than one style. Melville, Flaubert and Joyce are the exception; Stendhal, Dickens and Anatole France are the rule.

All this has been worth a somewhat heavy emphasis because these books are in many ways admirable. Mr. Balchin is the more imaginative and unusual. His theme is of intense and irresistible interest. Rice, the hero, duplicates Sarrat as the decent, industrious, able man struggling rather less effectively than his predecessor, against corruption, conceit and stupidity. Here the battlefield is no longer the Civil Service proper, but a small, anomalous scientific unit whose chief function is to deal with new weapons. A bomb disposal *motif* swells out of eerie beginnings into a climax of extraordinary horror and excitement. Love interest fails, as so often, to add anything of value, and the brief intervention of a young pilot contributes an episode of sharp embarrassment. But Mr. Balchin is a writer of real skill, and he has a vivid perception of the artistic possibilities in technical information. He has established a firm monopoly on his peculiar but admirable territory.

Pemberton also has a refreshing theme. Mr. Footman gives the same immediate impression of intelligence and individuality: he is occasionally betrayed into a sensitivity which is made tantalising by its immediate suppression. The background is a small Balkan capital in the days before and during its occupation by the Germans. The hero is modestly employed at the British Legation, which gives opportunities for many delicious sketches of diplomatic life, both sympathetic and sardonic. Pemberton is the drunken, worn-out black sheep of the business colony who responds to the country's peril with unexpected but convincing self-sacrifice. He is a delightful invention, neither caricatured nor dramatised, always sympathetic. Mr. Footman has an unusual narrative gift, but his book might have been richer.

There is a puritanical, or hypochondriacal, quality in many reviewers which leads them to suspect their own enjoyment. After reading a novel with keen interest and finishing it with regret, they remember their status, curl a lip and mutter the odious "readable." Yet were ever novelists more readable than Jane Austen or Turgenev or Forster! I trust that I haven't turned in any way sour on these two most readable novels. I enjoyed both, and both were a pure relief after the unreadable dignity of *Rhoda Fleming* and *The Rambler.*

Among other talents Mr. de Polnay has shown himself supremely readable. In *Water on the Steps* I found (and by definition no quality is more subjective) that this had temporarily deserted him. The book is full of vivid moments which leave no doubt of the author's talent, but I cannot find it a successful whole. The story deals with a heterogeneous community living in the South of France during the months which followed the collapse. There is a criminal elderly Armenian with his gang of Marseilles thugs; there are two young public school officers, a Cockney soldier, a patriotic Breton hotel-keeper, a fading cosmopolitan princess and many more. Now Mr. de Polnay has a talent for the grotesque: by nature he is an ironic and rather macabre humorist. Thus the richest moments in the book are all dominated by the gangsters or the princess, and by far the thinnest characters are the English. There is a pedestrian sociology in the accounts of English life and manners. Each of the four or five English characters is a fictional type, with the result that their various problems fail to achieve any reality. Surely Mr. de Polnay's eye is for the curious rather than the normal, and his talent is for invention rather than analysis.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

Mozart: *Symphony in C* (K338). Boston Symphony Orchestra, cond. Koussevitzky (H.M.V. DB5959–61).

Beethoven: *Eighth Symphony.* N.B.C. Symphony Orch., cond. Toscanini (H.M.V. DB.8957-9).

Cimarosa-Benjamin: *Oboe Concerto.* Leon Goossens, with the Liverpool Symphony Orch., cond. Malcolm Sargent (Col. DX1137–8).

Glinka: *Valse Fantasie.* Bolshoi Theatre State Orch. (Decca X277).

Bizet: *Carnaval (Roma) Suite.* Liverpool Philharmonic Orch., cond. Constant Lambert (Col. DX1136).

Kodaly: *Dances from Galanta.* Boston Promenade Orch. cond. Fiedler (H.M.V. C3367–8)

Smetana: *The Bartered Bride.* Three Dances Columbia Broadcasting Orch. (Col. DX1130).

Grieg: *Sigurd Jorsalfar:* Incidental Music. Indianapolis Symphony Orch. (H.M.V. C3373)

Tchaikowsky: *Eugen Onegin:* Scene 1, Act 2. E. I. Antonovo, I. C. Kozlovsky, and P. M. Nortsov, with Bolshoi Theatre Orch. (Decca X279)

Glinka: *Russlan and Ludmilla:* Parlaf's Rondo. Jouravlenko, with Kirov Leningrad State Opera Orch. (Decca X279).

Tchaikowsky: *Eugen Onegin:* Tatiana's Letter Song. Joan Hammond, with Hallé Orch. cond. Braithwaite (Col. DX1134–5).

Borodin: *Prince Igor:* Igor's Song. A. Baturin, with Bolshoi Theatre Orch. (Decca X280).

Glinka: *Russlan and Ludmilla: Persian Song.* Choir of the Bolshoi Theatre. *Bayan's Song.* Kronchenko (Decca X278)

Bach: *Be Thou with Me; In Faith I Quiet Wait; Come Sweetest Death.* Isobel Baillie with organ (Col. DX1133)

Purcell: *Mad Bess* and *Evening Hymn.* Astra Desmond, acc. Harold Craxton (Decca K1098)

Negro Spirituals: *Were you There; Hear de Lambs a cryin'; Plenty Good Room.* Roland Hayes (Col. DX1132)

Mozart: *Don Giovanni; Speak for me to my Lady; Mine be her Burden.* Webster Booth, with Liverpool Philharmonic Orch.. cond. Sargent (H.M.V. C3372)

Da Falla: *Andaluza; Récit du Pêcheur (El Amor Brujo); Danse du Meunier (Three-Cornered Hat).* Harriet Cohen (Col. DX1131).

Rachmaninoff: *Preludes in G and G sharp minor; Moment Musical in E minor.* Moisevitsch (H.M.V. C3370).

Grainger: *Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol,* and *The Arrival Platform Humlet.* Watson Forbes (Decca M540).

Scriabin: *Etude Op. 8 No. 10,* and *Nocturne Op. 5 No. 1.* David Oistrakh (Decca M545).

Considering the increasing shortage of materials, and all the other difficulties of record production at the present time, it is really very remarkable what the gramophone companies continue to give us. Being a thorough Englishman, I am a natural grumbler, and often feel moved to exclaim at the striking ineptitude of many of the records I am sent for review. But this does not prevent me—and should not prevent you—from admiring the pertinacity of H.M.V. and Decca, even when their experiments do seem a bit wild.

However, there is nothing wild about the first set on my present list. Before I heard the records I felt inclined to rail at the duplication of a work already extremely well served by Beecham; but, quite apart from the superlative playing of the Boston Orchestra, it must be recognised that Koussevitzky has something of his own to contribute to the interpretation of this entrancing little symphony: a quite special accuracy of tempo, a vividness, a warmth of sympathy, that Beecham had not given us.

The recording of the Boston orchestra is always better than that of the N.B.C.; still, nothing can excuse the bitter stridency and paper-thin texture of the latest recording of Beethoven No. 8. The performance may be—no doubt was—excellent; but what comes out of the loudspeaker (or horn) can scarcely be described as music at all.

To what extent the Cimarosa Oboe Concerto has been "arranged" by Arthur Benjamin I am unable to say; but the result is certainly a very pretty bit of conversation, beautifully turned out by the soloist. On side 4 is a fine piece of baroque decoration—the Sinfonia from Bach's Easter Oratorio.

Like all good naïve artists, Glinka had the root of the matter in him: his music is always genuine to the core. But he seems to have been content to rely on inspiration alone—very much as Borodin was later to do; with the result that his music is finally not as effective as professional accomplishment, or a little more cleverness, would have made it. This is vexing, particularly in the case of the Valse Fantasie, the material of which has a delightful freshness, as well as a "period" contour that is as truly graceful as that of a Biedemeier table. Music like this lives by a classic restraint that resists the ogling of fashion. But if only Glinka had taken just a little more trouble, our attention would not flag—as I think it does—some time before the end of the piece. Even a movement as brief as this has to be *composed,* i.e., given a shape, a climax, a coda that adds something new to our last glimpse. Here, unfortunately, is nothing of the kind: the Valse Fantasie is a string of beads without a clasp. The songs from *Russlan and Ludmilla* (also on my list) suffer from the same disadvantages. The fine, full-blooded singing holds our attention for a minute or two, after which boredom sets in: Glinka does not give us enough to listen to. It is in construction on a larger scale than this that Borodin fails; the items are usually admirable. *Igor's Song,* for instance, is as good an aria as any of its kind. Baturin has a typically Russian voice: magnificent in volume and assurance, it soon annoys by that bellowing quality, aggravated in this instance by an evil balance with the orchestra.

To return to the orchestral records, both Bizet's *Roma* and Kodaly's *Dances of Galanta* are musically rather meagre, though this fault is offset by vitality.

Roma is a comparatively youthful work and is more like early Dvořák than any French music. The Kodaly *Dances* were written as a show piece for a big orchestra and bear this origin writ large on their features. It is only fair to add that, despite a certain lack of depth, this is the finest recording the Boston Promenade Orchestra has yet produced. The Dances from the *Bartered Bride* are altogether more spontaneous; they are full of the poetry of high spirits, and I shall be surprised if this record is not a general success. On the other hand, I cannot imagine that the *Sigurd Jorsalfar* music will have much appeal. Glum and mechanical, it can never have been anything but occasional music—and the occasion has passed.

I suspect a mystery behind the issue of the odd snippet from Act II of *Eugen Onegin*. To begin with, there exists a record (apparently made by a Russian company and now unobtainable) of Prince Gremin's aria preceded by the concerted recitative which forms the beginning of the scene. This conversation, lightly touched in against the softly continuous background of the waltz, is one of the miracles of operatic literature, comparable to the Finale of Act II of Figaro, and the whole scene is incidentally as exact a musical expression of aristocratic feeling and manners as can be found. And now comes this absurd fragment—absurd because in itself it does not make sense. The performance is masterly and makes any English one look like five cents; but the fact that the excerpt is so very short, coupled with the existence of the former disc I have mentioned, suggests that there is in Russia a complete recording of the opera. If this is so, it is the positive duty of Decca to obtain and issue the complete set as soon as ever circumstances permit. All of which is no reflection on Miss Joan Hammond, who gives a beautifully expressive and rounded performance of Tatiana's Letter Song—or rather of as much of it as the wisdom of the gramophone company has allowed her to sing. The whole of the arioso could have been got on to one side, and no abuse can be too strong for a policy that omits this arioso altogether—and then fills up the fourth side of two discs with *Depuis le jour*. This stale pear-drop of a song is not improved by being delivered mezzo-forte throughout.

We are used to excellence from Miss Isobel Baillie; but her singing of "Be Thou with Me" gives occasion for real enthusiasm. There exists a lovely recording of this aria by Elisabeth Schumann; but Miss Baillie sings it with the purity and sweetness of a boy soprano, combined with a smoothness and roundness of tone less often found in the very young.

"Mad Bess" belongs to that class of music which we may agree to call interesting—and leave it at that. The *Evening Hymn* is more rewarding and suits Miss Desmond's voice very well.

Whether or no you are an amateur of negro spirituals, I do not think you will be able to resist Roland Hayes. I have not had the good luck to hear Mr. Hayes sing Schubert and Wolf; but I am told it is a remarkable experience, and after hearing this record I can well believe it. Apart from rhythmical subtlety, which one might expect, the variety and delicacy of tone displayed are those of a great singer.

Though not a great, Webster Booth is unquestionably an extremely good singer, and his rendering of these two masterpieces from *Don Giovanni* would, I should think, be admired in any opera house. His legato is beautiful, his mezza voce effortless; and he never smears a scale.

Miss Harriet Cohen's latest record contains three perfect miniatures by one of the few great living composers; but I could wish she had not taken the *Andaluza* quite so deliberately. This piece requires dash. Nor do I care very much for Moiseivitsch's playing of the two Rachmaninoff Preludes. These are very beautiful pieces of piano writing, but I feel the pianist spoils them by inappropriately shaped rubato. The third piece, a rather dull toccata, is marvellously touched off.

Watson Forbes is a most consoling viola player—the ideal soloist for Percy Grainger's rather over-ripe, but very sweet and haunting arrangement. The "Arrival Platform Humlet" is an unaccompanied, and only fairly amusing, joke.

I do not recommend the Scriabin record. Oistrakh is a magnificent violinist, but these transcriptions of piano pieces are clumsy and uninteresting.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

A Handbook of Greek and Roman Architecture. By D. S. ROBERTSON. *Cambridge University Press.* 31s. 6d.

This second edition of an authoritative work contains many revisions based on research that has supervened since the first edition in 1928. The book is severely archaeological, not to say "stiff," and the author too rarely commits himself to aesthetic considerations. No suggestion is offered, for instance, to explain why the Theseum at Athens is so disappointing an edifice. But every important classical building extant, from the Palace of Knossos to the Palace at Split, is mentioned, and among the numerous illustrations are hypothetical reconstructions of Baalbek and the Baths of Caracalla. Invaluable to students of classical architecture, the book would also make a precious present for a scholarly soldier in the M.E.F. who may find himself at Segesta or Paestum, at Palmyra or Jerash, even (one trusts) at Epidaurus or Orange. The decline in classical education is inevitably accompanied by a decline in knowledge of classical architecture, yet an acquaintance with this is essential if one is to enjoy good buildings not only of the Greek and Roman periods, but of the Renaissance and the 18th century.

Good Intentions. By OGDEN NASH. *Dent.* 7s. 6d.

Wild and neat as ever, here is Mr. Ogden Nash. How meticulously, in complaining rhapsodies about men and women, in clerihews of animals, in very long lines and very short lines, in the invention of silly rhymes, he keeps it up! He never disappoints and, now that we know his limitations, he can't really spring a surprise. But look him up on anything (an index would be a valuable addition), on Christmas, for example:

> Roses are things which Christmas is not a bed of them,
> Because it is the day when parents finally realise that their children will always be a jump ahead of them.
> You stay up all night trimming the tree into a veritable fairyland and then in the joyous morn you spring it on the children in a blaze of glory, and who says Ooh!?
> You.

The paradoxes of a social life tuned up more ruthlessly than our own to ghastly and endless enoyment provide Mr. Nash with most of his fun. What parties, what introductions, what salads, what women hitching up their coats as they sit down to bridge or gossip! The picture agrees with all we have learnt from ungentle essayists like Benchley and Skinner; and it's frightening. The title, if you look carefully, admits as much. Despite nonsense and an occasional tender lyric, Mr. Nash must wear an asbestos suit two feet thick, or he could never survive, year after year, volume after volume as he does.

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